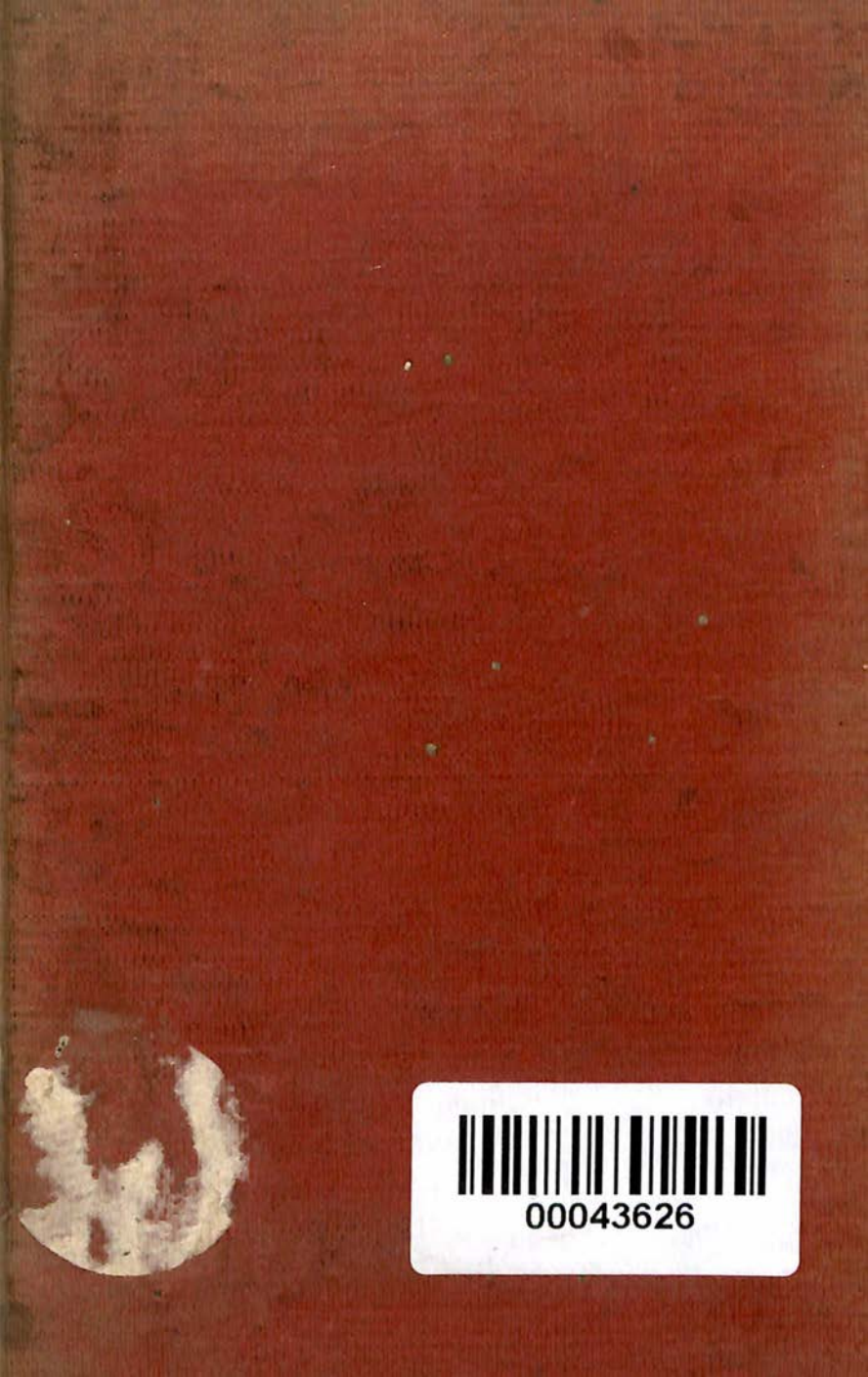
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THE

ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY

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PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN.

6 BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

VIGNETTES IN RHYME

AND

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ.

Third Edition. Fscap. 8vo., cloth.
Price 5s.

PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN

AND OTHER VERSES.

43626

BY

AUSTIN DOBSON.

"Majores majora sonent."

HENRY S. KING & CO., LONDON.
1877.

00043626

TO

FREDERICK LOCKER.

IS IT TO KINDEST FRIEND I SEND
THIS NOSEGAY GATHERED NEW?
OR IS IT MORE TO CRITIC SURE,—
TO SINGER CLEAR AND TRUE?
I KNOW NOT WHICH, INDEED, NOR NEED:
ALL THREE I FOUND—IN YOU.

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PROVERBS IN PORCELAIN.

PROLOGUE.

ASSUME *that we are friends. Assume*
A common taste for old costume,
Old pictures,—books. Then dream us sitting,—
We two,—in some soft-lighted room.

Outside the wind ;—the "ways are mire."
We, with our faces towards the fire,
Finished the feast not full but fitting,
Watch the light-leaping flames aspire.

Silent at first, in time we glow ;
Discuss "eclectics," high and low ;
Inspect engravings, 'twixt us passing
The fancies of DETROY, MOREAU ;

"Reveils" and "Couchers," "Balls" and "Fêtes ;"
Anon we glide to "crocks" and plates,
Grow eloquent on glaze and classing,
And half-pathetic over "states."

Then I produce my Prize, in truth ;—
Six groups in SÈVRES, *fresh as Youth,*
And rare as Love. You pause, you wonder,
(Pretend to doubt the marks, forsooth !)

And so we fall to why and how
The fragile figures smile and bow ;
Divine, at length, the fable under . . . .
Thus grew the "Scenes" that follow now.

THE BALLAD À-LA-MODE.

"Tout vient à point à qui peut attendre."

SCENE.—*A Boudoir Louis-Quinze, painted with Cupids shooting at Butterflies.*

THE COUNTESS. THE BARON *(her cousin and suitor).*

THE COUNTESS *(looking up from her work).*

Baron, you doze.

THE BARON *(closing his book).*

I, Madame? No.

I wait your order—Stay or Go.

THE COUNTESS.

Which means, I think, that Go or Stay
Affects you nothing, either way.

THE BARON.

Excuse me,—By your favour graced
My inclinations are effaced.

THE COUNTESS.

Or much the same. How keen you grow!
You must be reading MARIVAUX.

THE BARON.

Nay,—'twas a song of SAINTE-AULAIRE.

THE COUNTESS.

Then read me one. We've time to spare:
If I can catch the clock-face there,
'Tis barely eight.

THE BARON.

What shall it be,—
A tale of woe, or perfidy?

THE COUNTESS.

Not woes, I beg. I doubt your woes:
But perfidy, of course, one knows.

THE BARON *(reads).*

"Ah, Phillis! cruel Phillis!
(I heard a Shepherd say,)
You hold me with your Eyes, and yet
You bid me—Go my way!

"Ah, Colin! foolish Colin!
(The Maiden answered so,)
If that be All, the Ill is small,
I close them—You may go!

" But when her Eyes she opened,
(Although the Sun it shone,)
She found the Shepherd had not stirred—
" Because the Light was gone'!"

Ah, Cupid! wanton Cupid!
'T'was ever thus your Way:
When Maids would bid you ply your Wings,
You find Excuse to stay!

THE COUNTESS.

Famous! He earned whate'er he got:—
But there's some sequel, is there not?

THE BARON *(turning the page).*

I think not.—No. Unless 'tis this:
My fate is far more hard than his;—
In fact, *your* Eyes—

THE COUNTESS.

Now, that's a breach !
Your bond is—not to make a speech.
And we must start—so call JUSTINE.
I know exactly what you mean!—
Give me your arm—

THE BARON.

If, in return,
Countess, I could your hand but earn !

THE COUNTESS.

I thought as much. This comes, you see,
Of sentiment, and Arcady,
Where vows are hung on every tree . . .

THE BARON *(offering his arm, with a low bow).*

And no one dreams—of Perfidy.

THE METAMORPHOSIS.

"On s'enrichit quand on dort."

SCENE.—*A high stone Seat in an Alley of clipped Lime-trees.*

THE ABBÉ TIRILI. MONSIEUR L'ÉTOILE.

THE ABBÉ *(writing).*

"*This shepherdess Dorine adored*—"

What rhyme is next? *Implored?—ignored?*

Poured?—soared?—afford? That facile dunce,

L'ÉTOILE, would cap the line at once.

'Twill come in time. Meanwhile, suppose

We take a meditative doze.

(Sleeps. By and by his paper falls.)

M. L'ÉTOILE *(approaching from the back).*

Someone before me. What! 'tis you,
Monsieur the Scholar? Sleeping too!
(Picks up the fluttering paper.)
More "*Tales*," of course. One cant refuse
To chase so fugitive a Muse!
Verses are public, too, that fly
"*Cum privilegio*"—*Zephyri!*
(Reads.)
"CLITANDER AND DORINE." Insane!
He fancies he's a LA FONTAINE!
"*In early days, the Gods, we find,*
Paid frequent Visits to Mankind;—
At least, authentic Records say so
In Publius Ovidius Naso.
(Three names for one. This passes all.
'Tis "furiously" classical!)
"*No doubt their Purpose oft would be*
Some 'Nodus dignus Vindice';

'On dit,' not less, these earthly Tours
Were mostly matters of Amours.
And woe to him whose luckless Flame
Impeded that Olympic Game;
Ere he could say an 'Ave' o'er,
They changed him—like a Louis-d'or.
("*Aves*," and current coinage! O!—
O shade of NICHOLAS BOILEAU!)
"*Bird, Beast, or River he became:*
With Women it was much the same.
In Ovid Case to Case succeeds;
But Names the Reader never reads.
(That is, Monsieur the Abbé feels
His quantities are out at heels!)
"*Suffices that, for this our Tale,*
There dwelt in a Thessalian Vale,
Of Tales like this the constant Scene,
A Shepherdess, by name Dorine.
Trim Waist, ripe Lips, bright Eyes, had she:—

In short, the whole Artillery.

Her Beauty made some local Stir ;—

Men marked it. So did Jupiter.

This Shepherdess Dorine adored . . ."

Implored, ignored, and *soared,* and *poured*—

(He's scrawled them here !) We'll sum in brief

His fable on his second leaf.

(Writes.)

There, they shall know who 'twas that wrote :—

" L'Étoile's *is but a mock-bird's note.*" [*Exit*

The Abbé *(waking).*

Implored's the word, I think. But where,—

Where is my paper? Ah ! tis there !

Eh ! what ?

(Reads.)

The Metamorphosis.

(not in Ovid.)

" *The Shepherdess Dorine adored*

The Shepherd-Boy Clitander ;

But Jove himself, Olympus' Lord,
The Shepherdess Dorine adored.
Our Abbé's Aid the Pair implored;
And changed to Goose and Gander,
The Shepherdess Dorine adored
The Shepherd-Boy Clitander!"

L'ÉTOILE,—by all the Muses!

Peste!

He's off, post-haste, to tell the rest.
No matter. Laugh, Sir Dunce, to-day;
Next time 'twill be *my* turn to play.

THE SONG OUT OF SEASON.

"*Point de culte sans mystère.*"

SCENE.—*A Corridor in a Chateau, with Busts and Venice chandeliers.*

MONSIEUR L'ÉTOILE. TWO VOICES

M. L'ÉTOILE *(carrying a Rose).*

This is the place. MUTINE said here.
" Through the Mancini room, and near
The fifth Venetian chandelier . . ."
The fifth?—She knew there were but four;—
Still, here's the *busto* of the Moor.

(Humming.)

Tra-la, tra-la! If BIJOU wake,
She'll bark, no doubt, and spoil my shake!
I'll tap, I think. One cant mistake;
This surely is the door.

(Sings softly.)

" *When Jove, the Skies' Director,*
First saw you sleep of yore,
He cried aloud for Nectar,
'The Nectar quickly pour,—
The Nectar, Hebe, pour!' "

(No sound. I'll tap once more.)

(Sings again.)

" *Then came the Sire Apollo,*
He past you where you lay;
'Come, Dian, rise and follow

The dappled Hart to slay,—
The rapid Hart to slay.'"

(A rustling within.)

(Coquette ! She heard before.)

(Sings again.)

" And urchin Cupid after
Beside the Pillow curled,
He whispered you with Laughter,
'Awake and witch the World,—
O Venus, witch the World !'"

(Now comes the last. 'Tis scarcely worse,
I think, than Monsieur l'ABBÉ's verse.)

" So waken, waken, waken,
O You, whom we adore !
Where Gods can be mistaken,

Mere Mortals must be more,—
Poor Mortals must be more!"

(That merits an *encore!*)
"*So waken, waken, waken!*
O YOU *whom we adore!*

(*An energetic* VOICE.)

Tis thou, ANTOINE? Ah Addle-pate,
Ah Thief of Valet, always late!
Have I not told thee half-past eight
A thousand times!

(Great agitation.)

But wait,—but wait,—

M. L'ÉTOILE *(stupefied).*

Just Skies! What hideous roar!—
What lungs! The infamous Soubrette!
This is a turn I shant forget:—

To make me sing my *chansonnette*

Before old PRUDHOMME'S door!

(Retiring slowly.)

And yet, and yet,—it cant be she.

They prompted her. Who can it be?

(*A second* VOICE.)

IT WAS THE ABBÉ TI-RI-LI!

(In a mocking falsetto.)

"Where Gods can be mistaken,

Mere Poets must be more,—

BAD POETS *must be more!"*

THE CAP THAT FITS.

" *Qui sème épines n'aille déchaux.*"

SCENE.—*A Salon with blue and white Panels. Outside, Persons pass and re-pass upon Terrace.*

HORTENSE. ARMANDE. MONSIEUR LOYAL.

HORTENSE *(behind her fan.)*

Not young, I think.

ARMANDE *(raising her eye glass.)*

And faded, too !—

Quite faded ! Monsieur, what say you ?

M. LOYAL.

Nay, I defer to you. In truth,
To me she seems all grace and youth.

HORTENSE.

Graceful? You think it? What, with hands
That hang like this *(with a gesture.)*

ARMANDE.

And how she stands!

M. LOYAL.

Nay, I am wrong again. I thought
Her air delightfully untaught!

HORTENSE.

But you amuse me—

M. LOYAL.

Still her dress,—
Her dress at least, you must confess—

ARMANDE.

Is odious simply! JACOTOT
Did not supply that lace, I know;
And where, I ask, has mortal seen
A hat unfeathered!

HORTENSE.

Edged with green!

M. LOYAL.

The words remind me. Let me say
A Fable that I heard to-day.
Have I permission?

BOTH *(with enthusiasm)*

Monsieur, pray.

M. LOYAL.

Myrtilla (lest a Scandal rise
The Lady's Name I thus disguise),
Dying of Ennui, once decided,—

Much on Resource herself she prided,—
To choose a Hat. Forthwith she flies
On that momentous Enterprise.
Whether to Petit or Legros,
I know not: only this I know;—
Head-dresses then, of any Fashion,
Bore Names of Quality or Passion.
Myrtilla tried them, almost all:
"Prudence," she felt, was somewhat small;
"Retirement" seemed the Eyes to hide;
"Content," at once, she cast aside.
"Simplicity,"—'twas out of place;
"Devotion," for an older face:
Briefly, Selection smaller grew,
"Vexatious! odious!"—none would do!
Then, on a sudden, she espied
One that she thought she had not tried;
Becoming, rather,—"edged with green,"—
Roses in yellow, Thorns between.

"Quick! Bring me that!" 'Tis brought. "Complete,
Divine, Enchanting, Tasteful, Neat,"
In all the Tones. "And this you call—?"
"' ILL-NATURE,*' Madame. It fits all."*

HORTENSE.

A thousand thanks! So naively turned!

ARMANDE.

So useful too,—to those concerned!
'Tis yours?

M. LOYAL.

Ah no,—some cynic wit's;
And called (I think)—
(Placing his hat upon his breast,)
"The Cap that Fits."

THE SECRETS OF THE HEART.

"Le cœur mène où il va."

SCENE.—*A Châlet covered with Honeysuckle.*

NINETTE. NINON.

NINETTE.

This way—

NINON.

No, this way—

NINETTE.

This way, then.

(They enter the Châlet.)

You are as changing, Child,—as Men.

NINON.

But are they? Is it true, I mean?
Who said it?

NINETTE.

Sister SÉRAPHINE.

She was so pious and so good,
With such sad eyes beneath her hood,
And such poor little feet,—all bare!
Her name was EUGÉNIE LA FÈRE.
She used to tell us,—moonlight nights,—
When I was at the Carmelites.

NINON.

Ah, then it must be right. And yet,
Suppose for once—suppose, NINETTE—

NINETTE.

But what?—

NINON.

Suppose it were not so?
Suppose there *were* true men, you know!

NINETTE.

And then?

NINON.

Why,—if that could occur,
What kind of man should you prefer?

NINETTE.

What looks, you mean?

NINON.

Looks, voice and all.

NINETTE.

Well, as to that, he must be tall,
Or say, not "tall,"—of middle size;
And next, he must have laughing eyes,

And a hook-nose,—with, underneath,
O ! what a row of sparkling teeth !—

NINON *(touching her cheek suspiciously).*

Has he a scar on this side ?

NINETTE.

Hush !
Someone is coming. No ; a thrush :
I see it swinging there.

NINON.

Go on.

NINETTE.

Then he must fence, (ah, look, 'tis gone !)
And dance like Monseigneur, and sing
" Love was a Shepherd " :—everything
That men do. Tell me yours, NINON.

NINON.

Shall I ? Then mine has black, black hair,—

I mean he *should* have; then an air
Half-sad, half-noble; features thin;
A little *royale* on the chin;
And such a pale, high brow. And then,
He is a prince of gentlemen;—
He, too, can ride and fence, and write
Sonnets and madrigals, yet fight
No worse for that—

NINETTE.

I know your man.

NINON.

And I know yours. But you'll not tell,—
Swear it!

NINETTE.

I swear upon this fan,—
My Grandmother's!

NINON.

And I, I swear
On this old turquoise *reliquaire*,—
My great,—great Grandmother's ! !—
(After a pause.)
NINETTE !
I feel *so* sad.

NINETTE.

I too. But why ?

NINON.

Alas, I know not !

NINETTE *(with a sigh).*

Nor do I.

"GOOD NIGHT, BABETTE!"

'Si vieillesse pouvait!—'

SCENE.—*A small neat Room. In a high Voltaire Chair sits a white-haired old Gentleman.*

MONSIEUR VIEUXBOIS. BABETTE.

M. VIEUXBOIS *(turning querulously.)*

Day of my life! Where *can* she get?
BABETTE! I say! BABETTE!—BABETTE!!

BABETTE *(entering hurriedly.)*

Coming, M'sieu'! If M'sieu' speaks
So loud, he wont be well for weeks!

M. VIEUXBOIS.

Where have you been?

BABETTE.

Why M'sieu' knows:—

April!...Ville-d'Avray!...Ma'amselle ROSE!

M. VIEUXBOIS.

Ah! I am old,—and I forget.

Was the place growing green, BABETTE?

BABETTE.

But of a greenness!—yes, M'sieu'!

And then the sky so blue!—so blue!

And when I dropped my *immortelle,*

How the birds sang!

(Lifting her apron to her eyes.)

This poor Ma'am'selle!

M. VIEUXBOIS.

You're a good girl, BABETTE, but she,—

She was an Angel, verily.
Sometimes I think I see her yet
Stand smiling by the cabinet;
And once, I know, she peeped and laughed
Betwixt the curtains . . .
Where's the draught?

(She gives him a cup.)

Now I shall sleep, I think, BABETTE;—
Sing me your Norman *chansonnette.*

BABETTE *(sings.)*

" *Once at the Angelus*
(Ere I was dead),
Angels all glorious
Came to my Bed;—
Angels in blue and white
Crowned on the Head."

M. VIEUXBOIS *(drowsily.)*

" She was an Angel "..." Once she laughed "...

What, was I dreaming!

Where's the draught?

BABETTE *(showing the empty cup.)*

The draught, M'sieu'?

M. VIEUXBOIS.

How I forget!

I am so old! But sing, BABETTE!

BABETTE *(sings.)*

" One was the Friend I left

Stark in the Snow;

One was the Wife that died

Long,—long ago;

One was the Love I lost . . .

How could she know?"

M. VIEUXBOIS *(murmuring.)*

Ah, PAUL!...old PAUL!...EULALIE too!

And ROSE!...And O! " the sky so blue!

BABETTE *(sings.)*

" One had my Mother's eyes,
Wistful and mild;
One had my Father's face;
One was a Child:
All of them bent to me,—
Bent down and smiled!"

(He is asleep!)

M. VIEUXBOIS *(almost inaudibly.)*

" How I forget!"

" I am so old"..." Good night, BABETTE!"

EPILOGUE.

Heigho! how chill the evenings get!
Good night, NINON, *good night,* NINETTE!
Your little Play is played and finished;—
Go back, then, to your Cabinet!

LOYAL, L'ÉTOILE! *no more to day!*
Alas! they heed not what we say:
They smile with ardour undiminished;
But we,—we are not always gay!

THE BALLAD OF "BEAU BROCADE."

This is the Ballad of "Beau Brocade":—
How he was trapped by a serving maid!

I.

SEVENTEEN hundred and thirty nine:—
That was the date of this tale of mine.

First great GEORGE was buried and gone;
GEORGE the Second was plodding on.

LONDON, then, as the "Guides" aver,
Shared its glories with *Westminster;*

And people of rank, to correct their tone,
Went out of town to *Marybone.*

Those were the days of the War with *Spain,*
PORTO-BELLO would soon be ta'en;

WHITEFIELD preached to the colliers grim,
Bishops in lawn sleeves preached at him;

WALPOLE talked of "a man and his price";
Nobody's virtue was over-nice:—

Those, in fine, were the brave days when
Coaches were stopped by *Highwaymen!*

And of all the knights of the gentle trade
Nobody bolder than "BEAU BROCADE."

This they knew on the whole way down;
Best, maybe, at the "*Oak and Crown.*"

(For timorous folk on their pilgrimage
Would "club" for a "Guard" to ride the stage;

And the Guard that rode on more than one
Was the Host of this hostel's sister's son.)

Open we here on a March-day fine,
Under the oak with the hanging sign.

There was Barber DICK with his basin by;
Cobbler JOE with the patch on his eye;

Portly product of Beef and Beer,
JOHN the host, he was standing near.

Straining and creaking, with wheels awry,
Lumbering came the "*Plymouth Fly*";—

Lumbering up from *Bagshot Heath*,
Guard in the basket armed to the teeth;

Passengers heavily armed inside;
Not the less surely the coach had been tried!

Tried!—but a couple of miles away,
By a well-dressed man!—in the open day!

Tried successfully, never a doubt,
Pockets of passengers all turned out!

Cloak-bags rifled, and cushions ripped,
Even an Ensign's wallet stripped!

Even a Methodist hosier's wife
Offered the choice of her Money or Life!

Highwayman's manners no less polite,
Hoped that their coppers (returned) were right;—

Sorry to find the company poor,
Hoped next time they'd travel with more;—

Plucked them all at his ease, in short :—
Such was the "*Plymouth Fly's*" report.

Sympathy ! horror ! and wonderment !
"Catch the Villain !" (But Nobody went.)

Hosier's wife led into the Bar ;—
That's where the best strong waters are !

Followed the tale of the hundred-and-one
Things that Somebody ought to have done.

Ensign (of BRAGG'S) made a terrible clangour :
But for the Ladies had drawn his hanger !

Robber, of course, was "BEAU BROCADE" ;
Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid.

Devonshire DOLLY, plump and red,
Spoke from the gallery overhead ;—

Spoke it out boldly, staring hard :—
"Why didn't you shoot him GEORGE the Guard?"

Spoke it out bolder, seeing him mute :—
" GEORGE the Guard, why didn't you shoot? "

Portly JOHN grew pale and red,
(JOHN was afraid of her, people said ;)

Gasped that " DOLLY was surely cracked,"
(JOHN was afraid of her—that's a fact !)

GEORGE the Guard grew red and pale,
Slowly finished his quart of ale :—

" Shoot ? Why—Rabbit him !—didn't he shoot ? "
Muttered—" The Baggage was far too 'cute ! "

" Shoot ? " Why he'd flashed the pan in his eye ! "
Muttered—" She'd pay for it by and by ! "
Further than this made no reply.

Nor could a further reply be made,
For GEORGE was in league with "BEAU
BROCADE!"

And JOHN the Host, in his wakefullest state,
Was not, as a rule, immaculate.

But nobody's virtue was over-nice
When WALPOLE talked of "a man and his price;"

And wherever Purity found abode,
'T was certainly *not* on a posting road.

II.

"Forty" followed to "Thirty-nine."
Glorious days of the *Hanover* line!

Princes were born, and drums were banged;
Now and then batches of Highwaymen hanged.

"Glorious news!"—from the *Spanish Main;*
PORTO-BELLO at last was ta'en.

"Glorious news!" for the liquor trade!
Nobody dreamed of "BEAU BROCADE."

People were thinking of Spanish Crowns;
Money was coming from seaport towns!

Nobody dreamed of "BEAU BROCADE,"
(Only DOLLY the Chambermaid!)

Blessings on VERNON! Fill up the flagons;
Money was coming in "*Flys*" and "*Waggons.*"

Possibly JOHN the Host had heard;
Also, certainly, GEORGE the Guard.

And DOLLY had possibly tidings, too,
That made her rise from her bed anew,

Plump as ever, but stern of eye,
With a fixed intention to warn the "*Fly*."

Lingering only at JOHN his door,
Just to make sure of a jerky snore;

Saddling the grey mare, *Dumpling Star;*
Fetching the pistol out of the bar;

(The old horse-pistol that, they say,
Came from the battle of *Malplaquet;*)

Loading with powder that maids would use,
Even in "Forty," to clear the flues;

And a couple of silver buttons, the Squire
Gave her, away in *Devonshire.*

These she wadded—for want of better—
With the B—SH—P of L—ND—N's "Pastoral
Letter;"

Looked to the flint, and hung the whole,
Ready to use, at her pocket-hole.

Thus equipped and accoutred, DOLLY
Clattered away to "*Exciseman's Folly*;"—

Such was the name of a ruined abode,
Just on the edge of the *London* road.

Thence she thought she might safely try
As soon as she saw it to warn the "*Fly*."

But, as chance would have it, her rein she drew,
As the BEAU came cantering into the view.

By the light of the moon she could see him drest
In his famous gold-sprigged tambour vest;

And under his silver-gray surtout,
The laced, historical coat of blue,

That he wore when he went to *London-Spaw*,
And robbed Sir MUNGO MUCKLETHRAW.

Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid,
(Trembling a little, but not afraid,)
"Stand and Deliver, O 'BEAU BROCADE!'"

But the BEAU drew nearer, and would not speak,
For he saw by the moonlight a rosy cheek;

And a spavined mare that was worth a "cole;"
And a girl with her hand at her pocket-hole.

So never a word he spoke as yet,
For he thought 'twas a freak of MEG or BET;—
A freak of the "*Rose*" or the "*Rummer*" set.

Out-spoke DOLLY the Chambermaid,
(Tremulous now, and sore afraid,)
"Stand and Deliver, O 'BEAU BROCADE!'"—

Firing then, out of sheer alarm,
Hit the BEAU in the bridle-arm.

Button the first went none knows where,
But it carried away his *solitaire;*

Button the second a circuit made,
Glanced in under the shoulder-blade;—
Down from the saddle fell "BEAU BROCADE!"

Down from the saddle and never stirred!—
DOLLY grew white as a *Windsor* curd.

Slipped not less from the mare, and bound
Strips of her kirtle about his wound.

Then, lest his Worship should rise and flee,
Fettered his ancles—tenderly.

Jumped on his chesnut, BET the fleet
(Called after BET of *Portugal Street;*)

Came like the wind to the old Inn-door;—
Roused fat JOHN from a three-fold snore;—

Vowed she'd 'peach if he misbehaved...
Briefly, the "*Plymouth Fly*" was saved!

Staines and *Windsor* were all on fire:—
DOLLY was wed to a *Yorkshire* squire;
Went to Town at the K—G's desire!

But whether His M—J—STY saw her or not,
HOGARTH jotted her down on the spot;

And something of DOLLY one still may trace
In the fresh contours of his "*Milkmaid's*" face.

GEORGE the Guard fled over the sea:
JOHN had a fit,—of perplexity;

Turned King's evidence, sad to state;—
But John was never immaculate.

As for the BEAU, he was duly tried,
When his wound was healed, at *Whitsuntide;*

Served—for a day—as the last of "sights,"
To the world of *St. James's-Street* and "*White's;*"

Went on his way to TYBURN TREE,
With a pomp befitting his high degree,

Every privilege custom grants:—
At the gate of the prison a dram of *Nants*;

Bouquet of flowers at *Holborn Bar;*
Friends (in mourning) to follow his Car—
("t" is omitted where HEROES are!)

Everyone knows the speech he made;
Swore that he "rather admired the Jade!"—

Waved to the crowd with his gold-laced hat;
Talked to the Chaplain after that;

Turned to the Topsman undismayed...
This was the finish of "BEAU BROCADE!"

And this is the Ballad that seemed to hide
In the leaves of a dusty "LONDONER'S GUIDE;"

"*Humbly Inscrib'd*" *(with curls and tails)*
By the Author to FREDERICK, *Prince of* WALES:—

"*Published by* FRANCIS *and* OLIVER PINE;
Ludgate-Hill, at the Blackmoor Sign.
Seventeen-Hundred-and-Thirty-Nine."

THE CHILD-MUSICIAN.

He had played for his lordship's levee,
  He had played for her ladyship's whim,
Till the poor little head was heavy,
  And the poor little brain would swim.

And the face grew peaked and eerie,
  And the large eyes strange and bright,
And they said—too late—"He is weary!
  He shall rest for, at least, To-night!"

But at dawn, when the birds were waking,
  As they watched in the silent room,

With the sound of a strained cord breaking,
A something snapped in the gloom.

'Twas a string of his violoncello,
And they heard him stir in his bed :—
"Make room for a tired little fellow,
Kind God !—" was the last that he said.

A CASE OF CAMEOS.

AGATE.

(The Power of Love.)

FIRST, in an Agate vein, a Centaur strong,
With square man-breasts and hide of dapple dun,
His brown arms bound behind him with a thong,
On strained croup strove to free himself from one,—
A bolder rider than Bellerophon.
For, on his back, by some strange power of art,
There sat a laughing Boy with bow and dart,
Who drove him where he would, and driving him,
With that barbed toy would make him rear and start.
To this was writ " World-victor " on the rim.

CORNELIAN.

(The Fall of the Giants.)

NEXT was a Cornaline, in strange wise riven,
As when the sun comes leaping through a cloud.
From the mid space, Jove thundered out of heaven,
With full-hand sheaf, upon the headlong crowd
Of huge and wild-limbed Titans,—levin-cowed.
For lo, distort amid the crash of pine
Porphyrion lay; as tangled wrestlers twine,
Typhoëus,—Rhœtus, rolled ambiguous;
Mimas was blinded of the bolt divine;
And, like a mountain, fell Enceladus.

JASPER.

(The Box of Pandora.)

To this there followed a green Jasper stone,
Writ, in a snake-ring, with the name of her
Whom Vulcan fashioned out of earth alone,—
Not less, to Earth, of woes the harbinger.
But now, a moment-space, did Jove defer
His fateful boon; for, curious as a child,
By shifting light or shaken toy beguiled,
Pandora knelt where all those ills were hid;—
Yet, ere she loosed them, looking upward, smiled,
E'en with a finger, tremulous, at the lid.

CHALCEDONY.

(The Thefts of Mercury.)

THE next in legend bade "Beware of show!"
'Twas graven this on pale Chalcedony.
Here great Apollo, with unbended bow,
His quiver hard by on a laurel tree,
For some new theft was rating Mercury.
Who stood with downcast eyes, and feigned distress,
As daring not, for utter guiltiness,
To meet that angry voice and aspect joined.
His very heel-wings drooped; but yet, not less,
His backward hand the Sun-God's shafts purloined.

SARDONYX.

(The Song of Orpheus.)

THEN, on a Sardonyx, the man of Thrace,
The voice supreme that through Hell's portals stole,
With carved white lyre and head of god-like grace,
(Too soon, alas ! on Hebrus' wave to roll !)
Played to the beasts, from a great elm-tree bole.
And lo ! with half-shut eyes the leopard spread
His lissome length ; and deer with gentle tread
Came through the trees ; and, from a nearer spring,
The prick-eared rabbit paused ; while overhead
The stock-dove drifted downward, fluttering.

AMETHYST.

(The Crowning of Silenus.)

NEXT came an Amethyst,—the grape in hue.
On a mock throne, by fresh excess disgraced,
With heavy head, and thyrsus held askew,
The Youths, in scorn, had dull Silenus placed,
And o'er him "King of Topers" they had traced.
Yet but a King of Sleep he seemed at best,
With wine-bag cheeks that bulged upon his breast,
And vat-like paunch distent from his carouse.
Meanwhile, his ass, by no respect represt,
Munched at the wreath upon her Master's brows.

BERYL.

(The Sirens.)

LASTLY, with "Pleasure" was a Beryl graven,
Clear-hued,—divine. Thereon the Sirens sung:
What time, beneath, by rough rock-bases caven,
And jaw-like rifts where many a green bone clung,
The strong flood-tide, in-rushing, coiled and swung.
Then,—in the offing,—on the lift o' the sea,
A tall ship drawing shoreward, helplessly.
For, from the prow, e'en now the rowers leap
Headlong, nor seek from that sweet fate to flee...
Ah me, those Women-witches of the Deep!

CUPID'S ALLEY.

A MORALITY.

O, Love's but a dance,
Where Time plays the fiddle!
See the couples advance,—
O, Love's but a dance!
A whisper, a glance,—
'Shall we twirl down the middle?'
O, Love's but a dance,
Where Time plays the fiddle!

It runs (so saith my Chronicler)
Across a smoky City;—
A Babel filled with buzz and whirr,
Huge, gloomy, black and gritty;

Dark-louring looks the hill-side near,
Dark-yawning looks the valley,—
But here 'tis always fresh and clear,
For here—is 'Cupid's Alley.'

And, from an Arbour cool and green,
With aspect down the middle,
An ancient Fiddler, gray and lean,
Scrapes on an ancient fiddle;
Alert he seems, but aged enow
To punt the Stygian galley;—
With wisp of forelock on his brow,
He plays—in 'Cupid's Alley.'

All day he plays,—a single tune!—
But, by the oddest chances,
Gavotte, or Brawl, or Rigadoon,
It suits all kinds of dances;

My Lord may walk a *pas de Cour*
To Jenny's *pas de Châlet*;—
The folks who ne'er have danced before,
Can dance—in 'Cupid's Alley.'

And here, for ages yet untold,
Long, long before my ditty,
Came high and low, and young and old,
From out the crowded City;
And still to-day they come, they go,
And just as fancies tally,
They foot it quick, they foot it slow,
All day—in 'Cupid's Alley.'

Strange dance! 'Tis free to Rank and Rags;
Here no distinction flatters,
Here Riches shakes its money-bags
And Poverty its tatters;

Church, Army, Navy, Physic, Law;—
Maid, Mistress, Master, Valet;
Long locks, gray hairs, bald heads, and a',—
They bob—in 'Cupid's Alley.'

Strange pairs! To laughing, fresh Fifteen
Here capers Prudence thrifty;
Here Prodigal leads down the green
A blushing Maid of fifty;
Some treat it as a serious thing,
And some but shilly-shally;
And some have danced without the ring
(Ah me!)—in 'Cupid's Alley.'

And sometimes one to one will dance,
And think of one behind her;
And one by one will stand, perchance,
Yet look all ways to find her;

Some seek a partner with a sigh,
  Some win him with a sally;
And some, they know not how nor why,
  Strange fate!—of 'Cupid's Alley.'

And some will dance an age or so
  Who came for half a minute;
And some, who like the game, will go
  Before they well begin it;
And some will vow they're 'danced to death,'
  Who (somehow) always rally;
Strange cures are wrought (mine author saith),
  Strange cures!—in 'Cupid's Alley.'

It may be one will dance to-day,
  And dance no more to-morrow;
It may be one will steal away
  And nurse a life-long sorrow;

What then? The rest advance, evade,
Unite, dispart, and dally,
Re-set, coquet, and gallopade,
Not less—in 'Cupid's Alley.'

For till that City's wheel-work vast
And shuddering beams shall crumble;—
And till that Fiddler lean at last
From off his seat shall tumble;—
Till then (the Civic records say)
This quaint, fantastic *ballet*
Of Go and Stay, of Yea and Nay,
Must last—in 'Cupid's Alley.'

ROSE-LEAVES.

"*Sans peser.—Sans rester.*"

These are leaves of my rose,
Pink petals I treasure:
There is more than one knows
In these leaves of my rose;
O the joys! O the woes!
They are quite beyond measure.
These are leaves of my rose,—
Pink petals I treasure.

A KISS.

Rose kissed me to-day.
Will she kiss me to-morrow?
Let it be as it may,
Rose kissed me to-day.
But the pleasure gives way
To a savour of sorrow;—
Rose kissed me to-day,—
Will she kiss me to-morrow?

CIRCE.

In the School of Coquettes
Madam Rose is a scholar;—
O, they fish with all nets
In the School of Coquettes!
When her brooch she forgets
'Tis to show her new collar;
In the School of Coquettes
Madam Rose is a scholar!

A TEAR.

THERE's a tear in her eye,—
Such a clear little jewel!
What on earth makes her cry?
There's a tear in her eye.
"Puck has killed a big fly,—
And its *horribly* cruel;"
There's a tear in her eye,—
Such a clear little jewel!

"AMARI ALIQUID."

"WILL you hear 'All Alone'?"—
"No, I think I quite know it."
"But you liked it, my Own?"—
"When I *was*—'all alone'!
Now that season has flown;
And besides—*I've the Poet!*"—
"Will you hear 'All Alone'?"
"No, I think I *quite* know it."

A GREEK GIFT.

HERE'S a present for Rose,
How pleased she is looking!
Is it verse?—is it prose?
Here's a present for Rose!
"*Plats*," "*Entrées*," and "*Rôts*,"—
Why, it's "Gouffé on Cooking!"
Here's a present for Rose,
How *pleased* she is looking!

OLD LOVES.

"THEN, you liked little Bowes"—
"And you liked Jane Raby!"
"But you like *me* now, Rose?"
"As I liked 'little Bowes!'"
"Am I then to suppose?"—
"*Hush!—you mustn't wake Baby!*"
"*Did* you like little Bowes?"—
"If you liked Jane Raby!"

"URCEUS EXIT."

I INTENDED an Ode,
  And it turned into Triolets.
It began *à la mode*,
I intended an Ode;
But Rose crossed the road
  With a bunch of fresh violets;
I intended an Ode,
  And it turned into Triolets.

THE PRODIGALS.

" PRINCES !—and you, most valorous,
Nobles and Barons of all degrees !
Hearken awhile to the prayer of us,—
Beggars that come from the over-seas !
Nothing we ask or of gold or fees ;
Harry us not with the hounds we pray ;
Lo,—for the surcote's hem we seize,—
Give us—ah ! give us—but Yesterday !"

" Dames most delicate, amorous !
Damosels blithe as the belted bees !
Hearken awhile to the prayer of us,—
Beggars that come from the over-seas !
Nothing we ask of the things that please ;
Weary are we, and worn, and gray;
Lo,—for we clutch and we clasp your knees,—
Give us—ah ! give us—but Yesterday !"

" Damosels—Dames, be piteous !"
(But the dames rode fast by the roadway trees.)
" Hear us, O Knights magnanimous !"
(But the knights pricked on in their panoplies.)
Nothing they gat or of hope or ease,
But only to beat on the breast and say :—
" Life we drank to the dregs and lees ;
Give us—ah ! give us—but Yesterday !"

Envoy.

YOUTH, take heed to the prayer of these !
Many there be by the dusty way,—
Many that cry to the rocks and seas
" Give us—ah ! give us—but Yesterday ! "

"POOR MISS TOX."

It was an ancient Shepherdess,
Forlorn amid the flocks;
The tears she shed for loneliness
Would melt the hardest rocks.

In Dickens 'twas "Princess's Place,"
But here 'tis "Maiden Row,"
And yet 'tis still the self-same face,
The self-same air I know:
'Tis true the name is plainly "Brown,"
'Tis true the flowers are "stocks,"
And yet I'd wager half-a-crown
That you are—"poor Miss Tox!"

There can't, of course, be more than one;
The cases must be rare
Of maidens left to nurse alone
Dyspepsia and Despair;
Ah no; that gown of youthful make
Those tresses dark as Nox,
Those arching brows,—I can't mistake,
You must be—"poor Miss Tox!"

And then your daily ways:—I know
Exactly when you dust
The two old candlesticks of Bow
And good John Wesley's bust;
Exactly as your tea is spread
I set my pair of clocks;
(You take your morning meal in bed,
I fear—my "poor Miss Tox!")

I see you knit, I see you hem,
I see you painting flowers,
I see you read "Affection's Gem,"
Exhaustively,—for hours.
And once—I own 'twas somewhat late—
I saw you . . comb your locks;
Why was not mine Actæon's fate,
O Artemis—and Tox!

But still I look and still I see
That still the days evoke
No youth of artless modesty
Impatient for the yoke:
For "men may come, and men may go,"
But ne'er a suitor knocks
At that green door in "Maiden Row,"
To ask for—"poor Miss Tox!"

I wish one would,—I do indeed.
Without some careful guide
To curb his playful ways at need,
And o'er his purse preside;
To square his days to rule and plan,
To mend his gloves and socks,
Ah what, alas! were helpless man,
Ah what!—my "poor Miss Tox!"

And there must still be some, one feels,
Whom no such sway controls;
Who tread this vale with undarned heels,
And voids within their souls;
And I can't see why you should fail
To shield from Fortune's shocks
Some ardent—if not youthful—male,—
I can't,—my "poor Miss Tox!"

I think it hard that Fate has laid
  Your lot "upon the shelf;"
It cramps one's nature so to fade
  In that tight pot of Self;
Who knows but you might bud and bloom
  Had Wedlock's wider box
But lent you "verge enough and room,"—
  Who knows—my "poor Miss Tox!"

RONDELS AND RONDEAUS.

"TOO HARD IT IS TO SING."

Too hard it is to sing
  In these untuneful times,
When only coin can ring,
  And no one cares for rhymes!

Alas! for him who climbs
  To Aganippe's spring:—
  Too hard it is to sing
In these untuneful times!

His kindred clip his wing;
  His feet the critic limes;
If Fame her laurel bring
  Old age his forehead rimes:—
Too hard it is to sing
  In these untuneful times!

"CHANGE."

FREEZE, freeze, O icy wind !
  Lucilla's cap's awry ;
No signal undesigned
  To those that read the sky.

Dull drags the breakfast by :
  She's something on her mind ;—
Freeze, freeze, O icy wind !
  Lucilla's cap's awry !

" You're tired—" " And you're unkind ! "
  " You're cross—" "That I deny ! "
" Perhaps you're both combined."
  " I'm tired of You.—Good-bye ! "—
Freeze, freeze, O icy wind !
  Lucilla's cap's awry !

"FAIR."

BLOW, blow, Etesian gale !
Lucilla's cap is straight ;
Fill fast the flowing sail
Of happy man and mate.

" What is it, Dear?—A plate?—
Do taste this potted quail? "
Blow, blow, Etesian gale !
Lucilla's cap is straight.

" More sugar?—No? You're pale.
My Own, you work too late !
Ah me, if *you* should fail !
I'll see you to the gate."—
Blow, blow, Etesian gale !
Lucilla's cap is straight.

"YOU BID ME TRY."

(AFTER VOITURE.)

You bid me try, Blue-Eyes, to write
A Rondeau. What!—forthwith?—to-night?
Reflect. Some skill I have, 'tis true;
But thirteen lines,—and rhymed on two,—
"Refrain," as well. Ah, hapless plight!

Still, there are five lines,—ranged aright.
These Gallic bonds, I feared, would fright
My easy Muse. They did till you—
You bid me try!

That makes them nine. The port's in sight;—
'Tis all because your eyes are bright!
Now just a pair to end with "oo,"—
When maids command, what can't we do!
Behold!—the Rondeau, tasteful, light,
You bid me try!

"ON LONDON STONES."

(TO C. J. R.)

ON London stones I sometimes sigh
For wider green and bluer sky;—
Too oft the trembling note is drowned
In this huge city's varied sound;—
"Pure song is country-born"—I cry.

Then comes the spring,—the months go by,
The last stray swallows seaward fly;
And I—I too!—no more am found
On London stones!

In vain!—the woods, the fields deny
That clearer strain I fain would try;
Mine is an urban Muse, and bound
By some strange law to paven ground;
Abroad she pouts;—she is not shy
On London Stones!

"FAREWELL, RENOWN!"

(TO W. C. M.)

FAREWELL, Renown! Too fleeting flower,
That grows a year to last an hour;—
Prize of the race's dust and heat,
Too often trodden under feet,—
Why should I court your "barren dower?"

Nay;—had I Dryden's angry power,—
The thews of Ben,—the wind of Gower,—
Not less my voice should still repeat
"Farewell, Renown!"

Farewell!—Because the Muses' bower
Is filled with rival brows that lower;—
Because, howe'er his pipe be sweet,
The Bard, that "pays," must please the street;—
But most . . because the grapes are sour,—
Farewell, Renown!

"TO YOU I SING."

(TO E. K.)

To you I sing, whom towns immure,
And bonds of toil hold fast and sure;—
To you across whose aching sight
Come woodlands bathed in April light,
And dreams of pastime premature.

And you, O Sad, who still endure
Some wound that only Time can cure,—
To you, in watches of the night,
To you I sing!

But most to you with eyelids pure,
Scarce witting yet of love or lure;—
To you, with bird-like glances bright,
Half-paused to speak, half-poised in flight;—
O English Girl, divine, demure,
To YOU I sing!

"MORE POETS YET!"

(TO J. L. W.)

"MORE Poets yet!"—I hear him say,
Arming his heavy hand to slay;—
"Despite my skill and 'swashing blow,'
They seem to sprout where'er I go;—
I killed a host but yesterday!"

Slash on, O Hercules! You may.
Your task's, at best, a Hydra-fray;
And though *you* cut, not less will grow
More Poets yet!

Too arrogant! For who shall stay
The first blind motions of the May?
Who shall out-blot the morning glow?—
Or stem the full heart's overflow?
Who? There will rise, till Time decay,
More Poets yet!

"WITH PIPE AND FLUTE."

(TO E. W. G.)

WITH pipe and flute the rustic Pan
Of old made music sweet for man;
And wonder hushed the warbling bird,
And closer drew the calm-eyed herd,—
The rolling river slowlier ran.

Ah! would,—ah! would, a little span,
Some air of Arcady could fan
This age of ours, too seldom stirred
With pipe and flute!

But now for gold we plot and plan;
And from Beersheba unto Dan,
Apollo's self might pass unheard,
Or find the night-jar's note preferred;—
Not so it fared, when time began,
With pipe and flute!

THE IDYLL OF THE CARP.

(The Scene is in a garden,—where you please,
So that it lie in France, and have withal
Its gray-stoned pond beneath the arching trees,
And Triton huge, with moss for coronal.
A PRINCESS,—*feeding Fish. To her* DENISE.)

THE PRINCESS.

These, DENISE, are my Suitors!

DENISE.

Where?

THE PRINCESS.

These fish.

I feed them daily here at morn and night
With crumbs of favour,—scraps of graciousness,

Not meant, indeed, to mean the thing they wish,
But serving just to edge an appetite.

(Throwing bread.)

Make haste, *Messieurs!* Make haste, then! Hurry.
See,—
See how they swim! Would you not say, confess,
Some crowd of Courtiers in the audience hall,
When the King comes?

DENISE.

You're jesting!

THE PRINCESS.

Not at all.
Watch but the great one yonder! There's the Duke;—
Those gill-marks mean his Order of St. Luke;
Those old skin-stains his boasted quarterings.
Look what a swirl and roll of tide he brings;
Have you not marked him thus, with crest in air,

Breathing disdain, descend the palace-stair?
You surely have, DENISE.

DENISE.

I think I have.
But there's another, older and more grave,—
The one that wears the round patch on the throat
And swims with such slow fins. Is he of note?

THE PRINCESS.

Why that's my good *chambellan*—with his seal.
A kind old man!—he carves me orange-peel
In quaint devices at refection-hours,
Equips my sweet-pouch, brings me morning flowers
Or chirrups madrigals with old, sweet words,
Such as men loved when people wooed like birds
And spoke the true note first. No suitor he,
Yet loves me too,—though in a graybeard's key.

DENISE.

Look, Madam, look!—a fish without a stain!

O speckless, fleckless fish! Who is it pray,
That bears him so discreetly?

THE PRINCESS.

FONTENAY.

You know him not? My prince of shining locks!
My pearl!—my Phœnix!—my pomander-box!
He loves not Me, alas! The man's too vain!
He loves his doublet better than my suit,—
His graces than my favours. Still his sash
Sits not amiss, and he can touch the lute
Not wholly out of tune—

DENISE.

Ai! what a splash!
Who is it comes with such a sudden dash
Plump i' the midst, and leaps the others clear?

THE PRINCESS.

Ho! for a trumpet! Let the bells be rung!

Baron of *Sans-terre*, Lord of *Prés-en-Cieux*,
Vidame of *Vol-au-Vent*—"*et aultres lieux!*"—
Bah! How I hate his Gasconading tongue!
Why, that's my bragging, Bravo-Musketeer—
My carpet cut-throat, valiant by a scar
Got in a brawl that stands for Spanish war:—
His very life's a splash!

DENISE.

I'd rather wear
E'en such a patched and melancholy air,
As his,—that motley one,—who keeps the wall,
And hugs his own lean thoughts for carnival.

THE PRINCESS.

My frankest wooer! Thus *his* love he tells
To mournful moving of his cap and bells.
He loves me (so he saith) as Slaves the Free,—
As Cowards War,—as young Maids Constancy.

Item, he loves me as the Hawk the Dove;
He loves me as the Inquisition Thought;—

DENISE.

'He loves?—he loves?' Why all this loving's naught!

THE PRINCESS.

And "Naught (quoth JACQUOT) makes the sum of Love!"

DENISE.

The cynic knave! How call you this one here?—
This small shy-looking fish, that hovers near,
And circles, like a cat around a cage,
To snatch the surplus.

THE PRINCESS.

CHÉRUBIN, the page.

'Tis but a child, yet with that roguish smile,
And those sly looks, the child will make hearts ache
Not five years hence, I prophesy. Meanwhile

He lives to plague the swans upon the lake,
To steal my comfits, and the monkey's cake.

DENISE.

And these—that swim aside—who may these be?

THE PRINCESS.

Those—are two gentlemen of Picardy,
Equal in blood,—of equal bravery:—
D'AURELLES and MAUFRIGNAC. They hunt in pair;
I mete them morsels with an equal care,
Lest they should eat each other,—or eat Me.

DENISE.

And that—and that—and that?

THE PRINCESS.

I name them not.
Those are the crowd who merely think their lot
The lighter by my land.

DENISE.

And is there none
More prized than most? There surely must be one,—
A Carp of carps!

THE PRINCESS.

Ah me!—he will not come!
He swims at large,—looks shyly on,—is dumb.
Sometimes, indeed, I think he fain would nibble,
But while he stays with doubts and fears to quibble,
Some gilded fop, or mincing courtier-fribble,
Slips smartly in,—and gets the proffered crumb.
He should have all my crumbs—if he'd but ask;
Nay, an he would, it were no hopeless task
To gain a something more. But though he's brave,
He's far too proud to be a dangling slave;
And then—he's modest! So . . . he will not come!

THE FORGOTTEN GRAVE.

A SKETCH IN A CEMETERY.

OUT from the City's dust and roar,
You wandered through the open door;
Paused at a plaything pail and spade
Across a tiny hillock laid;
Then noted on your dexter side
Some moneyed mourner's "love or pride;"
And so,—beyond a hawthorn-tree,
Showering its rain of rosy bloom

Alike on low and lofty tomb,—
You came upon it—suddenly.

How strange! The very grasses' growth
Around it seemed forlorn and loath;
The very ivy seemed to turn
Askance that wreathed the neighbour urn.
The slab had sunk; the head declined,
And left the rails a wreck behind.
No name; you traced a "6,"—a "7,"—
Part of "affliction" and of "Heaven";
And then, in letters sharp and clear,
You read—O Irony austere!—
"*Tho' lost to Sight, to Memory dear.*"

THE MISOGYNIST.

" Il était un jeune homme d'un bien beau passé."

When first he sought our haunts, he wore
His locks in Hamlet-style ;
His brow with thought was " sicklied o'er,"—
We rarely saw him smile ;
And, e'en when none were looking on,
His air was always woe-begone.

He kept, I think, his bosom bare
To imitate Jean Paul;
His solitary topics were
Æsthetics, Fate, and Soul;—
Although at times, but not for long,
He bowed his Intellect to song.

He served, he said, a Muse of Tears:
I know his verses breathed
A fine funereal air of biers,
And objects cypress-wreathed;—
Indeed, his tried acquaintance fled
An ode he named "The Sheeted Dead."

In these light moods, I call to mind,
He darkly would allude
To some dread sorrow undefined,—
Some passion unsubdued;
Then break into a ghastly laugh,
And talk of Keats his epitaph.

He railed at women's faith as Cant;
We thought him grandest when
He named them Siren-shapes that "chant
On blanching bones of Men;"—
Alas, not e'en the great go free
From that insidious minstrelsy!

His lot, he oft would gravely urge,
Lay on a lone Rock where
Around Time-beaten bases surge
The Billows of Despair.
We dreamed it true. We never knew
What gentler ears he told it to.

We, bound with him in common care,
One-minded, celibate,
Resolved to Thought and Diet spare
Our lives to dedicate;—
We, truly, in no common sense
Deserved his closest confidence!

But soon, and yet, though soon, too late,
We, sorrowing, sighed to find
A gradual softness enervate
That all superior mind,
Until,—in full assembly met,
He dared to speak of Etiquette.

The verse that we severe had known,
Assumed a wanton air,—
A fond effeminate monotone
Of eyebrows, lips, and hair;
Not ἦθος stirred him now or νοῦς,
He read "The Angel in the House!"

Nay worse. He, once sublime to chaff,
Grew whimsically sore
If we but named a photograph
We found him simpering o'er;
Or told how in his chambers lurked
A watch-guard intricately worked.

Then worse again. He tried to dress;
He trimmed his tragic mane;
Announced at length (to our distress)
He had not "lived in vain;"—
Thenceforth his one prevailing mood
Became a base beatitude.

And O Jean Paul, and Fate, and Soul!
We met him last, grown stout,
His throat with wedlock's triple roll,—
"All wool,"—enwound about;
His very hat had changed its brim;—
Our course was clear,—WE BANISHED HIM!

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THE PRAYER OF THE SWINE TO CIRCE.

HUDDLING they came, with shag sides caked of mire,—
With hoofs fresh sullied from the troughs o'erturned,—
With wrinkling snouts, yet eyes in which desire
Of some strange thing unutterably burned,—
Unquenchable; and still where'er She turned
They rose about her, striving each o'er each,
With restless, fierce impórtuning that yearned
Through those brute masks some piteous tale to teach,
Yet lacked the words thereto, denied the power of speech.

For these—Eurylochus alone escaping—
In truth, that small exploring band had been,
Whom wise Odysseus, dim precaution shaping,
Ever at heart, of peril unforeseen,
Had sent inland ;—whom then the islet-Queen,—
The fair disastrous daughter of the Sun,—
Had turned to likeness of the beast unclean,
With evil wand transforming one by one
To shapes of loathly swine, imbruted and undone.

But " the men's minds remained," and these for ever
Made hungry suppliance through the fire-red eyes ;
Still searching aye, with impotent endeavour,
To find, if yet, in any look, there lies
A saving hope, or if they might surprise
In that cold face soft pity's spark concealed,
Which she, still scorning, evermore denies ;
Nor was there in her any ruth revealed
To whom with such mute speech and dumb words they appealed.

What hope is ours—what hope! To find no mercy
After much war, and many travails done?—
Ah, kinder far than thy fell philtres, Circe,
The ravening Cyclops and the Læstrigon!
And O, thrice cursèd be Laertes' son,
By whom, at last, we watch the days decline
With no fair ending of the quest begun,
Condemned in styes to weary and to pine
And with men's hearts to beat through this foul front of swine!

For us not now,—for us, alas! no more
The old green glamour of the glancing sea;
For us not now the laughter of the oar,—
The strong-ribbed keel wherein our comrades be;
Not now, at even, any more shall we,
By low-browed banks and reedy river places,
Watch the beast hurry and the wild fowl flee;
Or steering shoreward, in the upland spaces
Have sight of curling smoke and fair-skinned foreign faces.

Alas for us!—for whom the columned houses
We left afore-time, cheerless must abide;
Cheerless the hearth where now no guest carouses,—
No minstrel raises song at eventide;
And O, more cheerless than aught else beside,
The wistful hearts with heavy longing full;—
The wife that watched us on the waning tide,—
The sire whose eyes with weariness are dull,—
The mother whose slow tears fall on the carded wool.

If swine we be,—if we indeed be swine,
Daughter of Persé, make us swine indeed,
Well-pleased on litter-straw to lie supine,—
Well-pleased on mast and acorn-shales to feed,
Stirred by all instincts of the bestial breed;
But O Unmerciful! O Pitiless!
Leave us not thus with sick men's hearts to bleed!—
To waste long days in yearning, dumb distress
And memory of things gone, and utter hopelessness!

Leave us at least, if not the things we were,
At least consentient to the thing we be;
Not hapless doomed to loathe the forms we bear,
And senseful roll in senseless savagery;
For surely cursed above all cursed are we,
And surely this the bitterest of ill;—
To feel the old aspirings fair and free
Become blind motions of a powerless will
Through swine-like frames dispersed to swine-like issues still.

But make us men again, for that thou mays't!—
Yea, make us men, Enchantress, and restore
These grovelling shapes, degraded and debased
To fair embodiments of men once more;—
Yea, by all men that ever woman bore;—
Yea, e'en by him hereafter born in pain,
Shall draw sustainment from thy bosom's core,
O'er whom thy face yet kindly shall remain,
And find its like therein,—make thou us men again!

Make thou us men again,—if men but groping
That dark Hereafter which th' Olympians keep;
Make thou us men again,—if men but hoping
Behind death's doors security of sleep;—
For yet to laugh is somewhat, and to weep;—
To feel delight of living, and to plough
The salt-blown acres of the shoreless deep;—
Better,—yea better far all these than bow
Foul faces to foul earth, and yearn—as we do now!

So they in speech unsyllabled. But She,
The fair-tressed Goddess, born to be their bane,
Uplifting straight her wand of ivory,
Compelled them groaning to the styes again;
Where they in hopeless bitterness were fain
To rend the oaken woodwork as before,
And tear the troughs in impotence of pain,—
Not knowing, they, that even at the door
Divine Odysseus stood,—as Hermes told of yore.

TO A GREEK GIRL.

(AFTER A WEEK OF LANDOR'S "HELLENICS.")

WITH breath of thyme and bees that hum,
Across the years you seem to come,—
Across the years with nymph-like head,
And wind-blown brows unfilleted;
A girlish shape that slips the bud
  In lines of unspoiled symmetry;
A girlish shape that stirs the blood
  With pulse of Spring, Autonoë!

Where'er you pass,—where'er you go,
I hear the pebbly rillet flow;
Where'er you go,—where'er you pass,
There comes a gladness on the grass;
You bring blithe airs where'er you tread,—
  Blithe airs that blow from down and sea;
You wake in me a Pan not dead,—
  Not wholly dead!—Autonoë!

How sweet with you on some green sod
To wreathe the rustic garden-god;
How sweet beneath the chesnut's shade
With you to weave a basket-braid;
To watch across the stricken chords
  Your rosy-twinkling fingers flee;
Or woo you in soft woodland words,
  With woodland pipe, Autonoë!

In vain,—in vain! The years divide:
Where Thamis rolls a murky tide,
I sit and fill my painful reams,
And see you only in my dreams;—
A vision, like Alcestis, brought
From under-lands of Memory,—
A dream of Form in days of Thought,—
A dream,—a dream, Autonoë!

A CHAPTER OF FROISSART.

(ROMAN DE GRAND-PÈRE.)

You don't know Froissart now, young folks.
This age, I think, prefers recitals
Of high-spiced crime, with "slang" for jokes,
And startling titles;

But, in my time, when still some few
Loved "old Montaigne," and praised Pope's *Homer*
(Nay, thought to style him "poet" too,
Were scarce misnomer),

Sir John was less ignored. Indeed,
I can re-call how Some-one present
(Who spoils her grand-son, Frank!) would read,
And find him pleasant;

For,—by this copy,—hangs a Tale.
Long since, in an old house in Surrey,
Where men knew more of "morning ale"
Than "Lindley Murray,"

In a dim-lighted, whip-hung hall,
'Neath Hogarth's "Midnight Conversation"
It stood; and oft 'twixt spring and fall,
With fond elation,

I turned the brown old leaves. For there
All through one hopeful happy summer,

At such a page (I well knew where),
Some secret comer,

Whom I can picture, 'Trix, like you
(Though scarcely such a colt unbroken),
Would sometimes place for private view
A certain token ;—

A rose-leaf meaning "Garden Wall,"
An ivy-leaf for "Orchard corner,"
A thorn to say "Don't come at all,"—
Unwelcome warner !—

Not that, in truth, our friends gainsaid ;
But then Romance required dissembling,
(Ann Radcliffe taught us that !) which bred
Some genuine trembling ;—

Though, as a rule, all used to end
In such kind confidential parley
As may to you kind Fortune send,
You long-legged Charlie,

When your time comes. How years slip on!
We had our crosses like our betters;
Fate sometimes looked askance upon
Those floral letters;

And once, for three long days disdained,
The dust upon the folio settled;
For some-one, in the right, was pained,
And some-one nettled,

That sure was in the wrong, but spake
Of fixed intent and purpose stony

To serve King George, enlist and make
Minced-meat of " Boney,"

Who yet survived—ten years at least.
And so, when she I mean came hither
One day that need for letters ceased,
She brought this with her!

Here is the leaf-stained Chapter :—*How*
The English King laid siege to Calais;
I think Gran. knows it even now,—
Go ask her, Alice.

A ROMAN "ROUND-ROBIN."

("HIS FRIENDS" TO QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS.)

"*Hæc decies repetita* [non] *placebit.*"—ARS POETICA.

FLACCUS, you write us charming songs:
No bard we know possesses
In such perfection what belongs
To brief and bright addresses;

No man can say that Life is short
With mien so little fretful;
No man to Virtue's paths exhort
In phrases less regretful;

Or touch, with more serene distress,
On Fortune's ways erratic;
And then delightfully digress
From Alp to Adriatic:

All this is well, no doubt, and tends
Barbarian minds to soften;
But, Horace—we, we are your friends—
Why tell *us* this so often?

Why feign to spread a cheerful feast,
And then thrust in our faces
These barren scraps (to say the least)
Of Stoic common-places?

Recount, and welcome, your pursuits:
Sing Lydé's lyre and hair;
Sing drums and Berecynthian flutes;
Sing parsley-wreaths; but spare,—

O, spare to sing, what none deny,
That things we love decay;—
That Time and Gold have wings to fly;—
That all must Fate obey!

Or bid us dine—on this day week—
And pour us, if you can,
As soft and sleek as girlish cheek,
Your inmost Cæcuban;—

Of that we fear not overplus;
But your didactic 'tap'—
Forgive us!—grows monotonous;
Nunc vale! Verbum sap.

DAISY'S VALENTINES.

ALL night through Daisy's sleep, it seems,
Have ceaseless "rat-tats" thundered;
All night through Daisy's rosy dreams
Have devious Postmen blundered,
Delivering letters round her bed,—
Suggestive missives, sealed with red,
And franked of course with due Queen's-head,—
While Daisy lay and wondered.

But now, when chirping birds begin,
And Day puts off the Quaker,—
When Cook renews her morning din,
And rates the cheerful baker,—
She dreams her dream no dream at all,
For, just as pigeons come at call,
Winged letters flutter down, and fall
Around her head, and wake her.

Yes, there they are! With quirk and twist,
And fraudful arts directed;
(Save Grandpapa's dear stiff old "fist,"
Through all disguise detected;)
But which is his,—her young Lothair's,—
Who wooed her on the school-room stairs
With three sweet cakes, and two ripe pears,
In one neat pile collected?

'Tis there, be sure. Though truth to speak,
(If truth may be permitted),
I doubt that young "gift-bearing Greek"
Is scarce for fealty fitted;
For has he not (I grieve to say),
To two loves more, on this same day,
In just this same emblazoned way,
His transient vows transmitted?

He *may* be true. Yet, Daisy dear,
That even youth grows colder
You'll find is no new thing, I fear;
And when you're somewhat older,
You'll read of one Dardanian boy
Who "wooed with gifts" a maiden coy,—
Then took the morning train to Troy,
In spite of all he'd told her.

But wait. Your time will come. And then,
Obliging Fates, please send her
The nicest thing you have in men,
Sound-hearted, strong, and tender;—
The kind of man, dear Fates, you know,
That feels how shyly Daisies grow,
And what soft things they are, and so
Will spare to spoil or mend her.

A NIGHTINGALE IN KENSINGTON GARDENS.

They paused,—the cripple in the chair,
More bent with pain than age;
The mother with her lines of care;
The many-buttoned page;

The noisy, red-cheeked nursery-maid,
With straggling train of three;
The Frenchman with his frogs and braid;—
All, curious, paused to see,

If possible, the small, dusk bird
  That from the almond bough,
Had poured the joyous chant they heard,
  So suddenly, but now.

And one poor POET stopped and thought—
  How many a lonely lay
That bird had sung ere fortune brought
  It near the common way,

Where the crowd hears the note. And then,—
  What birds must sing the song,
To whom that hour of listening men
  Could ne'er in life belong!

But "Art for Art!" the Poet said,
  "'Tis still the Nightingale,
That sings where no men's feet will tread,
  And praise and audience fail."

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY
LIBRARY
OF THE
BOMBAY
BRANCH
OF THE

THE PARADOX OF TIME.

(A VARIATION ON RONSARD.)

" Le temps s'en va, le temps s'en va, ma dame !
Las ! le temps non : mais NOUS *nous en allons !"*

TIME goes, you say? Ah no!
Alas, Time stays, *we* go;
Or else, were this not so,
What need to chain the hours,
For Youth were always ours?
Time goes, you say?—ah no!

Ours is the eyes' deceit
Of men whose flying feet
  Lead through some landscape low;
We pass, and think we see
The earth's fixed surface flee:—
  Alas, Time stays,—we go!

Once in the days of old,
Your locks were curling gold,
  And mine had shamed the crow;
Now, in the self-same stage,
We've reached the silver age;
  Time goes, you say?—ah no!

Once, when my voice was strong,
I filled the woods with song
  To praise your "rose" and "snow"

My bird, that sang is dead ;
Where are your roses fled ?
Alas, Time stays,—we go !

See, in what traversed ways,
What backward Fate delays
The hopes we used to know ;
Where are our old desires ?—
Ah, where those vanished fires ?
Time goes, you say ?—ah no !

How far, how far, O Sweet,
The past behind our feet
Lies in the even-glow !
Now, on the forward way,
Let us fold hands and pray ;
Alas, Time stays,—*we* go !

A SONG OF THE FOUR SEASONS.

WHEN Spring comes laughing
  By vale and hill,
By wind-flower walking
  And daffodil,—
Sing stars of morning,
  Sing morning skies,
Sing blue of speedwell,
  And my Love's eyes.

When comes the Summer,
  Full-leaved and strong,
And gay birds gossip
  The orchard long,—
Sing hid, sweet honey
  That no bee sips;
Sing red, red roses,
  And my Love's lips.

When Autumn scatters
  The leaves again,
And piled sheaves bury
  The broad-wheeled wain,—
Sing flutes of harvest
  Where men rejoice;
Sing rounds of reapers,
  And my Love's voice.

But when comes Winter
With hail and storm,
And red fire roaring
And ingle warm,—
Sing first sad going
Of friends that part;
Then sing glad meeting
And my Love's heart.

THE MOSQUE OF THE CALIPH.

UNTO Seyd the vizier spake the Caliph Abdallah :—
" Now hearken and hear, I am weary, by Allah !
I am faint with the mere over-running of leisure ;
I will rouse me and rear up a palace to Pleasure ! "

To Abdallah the Caliph spake Seyd the vizier :—
" All faces grow pale if my Lord draweth near ;
And the breath of his mouth not a mortal shall scoff
it ;—
They must bend and obey, by the beard of the
Prophet ! "

Then the Caliph that heard, with becoming sedateness,
Drew his hand down *his* beard as he thought of his greatness;
Drained out the last bead of the wine in the chalice:
"I have spoken, O Seyd; I will build it, my palace!

"As a drop from the wine where the wine-cup hath spilled it,
As a gem from the mine,—O my Seyd, I will build it;
Without price, without flaw, it shall stand for a token
That the word is a law which the Caliph hath spoken!"

Yet again to the Caliph bent Seyd the vizier:
"Who shall reason or rail if my Lord speaketh clear?
Who shall strive with his might? Let my Lord live for ever!
He shall choose him a site by the side of the river."

Then the Caliph sent forth unto Kür, unto Yemen,—
To the South, to the North,—for the skilfullest free-
men;
And soon, in a close, where the river breeze fanned it,
The basement uprose, as the Caliph had planned it.

Now the courses were laid and the corner-piece fitted;
And the butments and set-stones were shapen and
knitted,
When lo! on a sudden the Caliph heard frowning,
That the river had swelled, and the workmen were
drowning.

Then the Caliph was stirred and he flushed in his ire
as
He sent forth his word from Teheran to Shiraz;
And the workmen came new, and the palace, built
faster,
From the bases up-grew unto arch and pilaster.

And the groinings were traced, and the arch-heads were chasen,
When lo! in hot haste there came flying a mason,
For a cupola fallen had whelmed half the workmen;
And Hamet the chief had been slain by the Turc'men.

Then the Caliph's beard curled, and he foamed in his rage as
Once more his scouts whirled from the Tell to the Hedjaz;
"Is my word not my word?" cried the Caliph Abdallah;
"I *will* build it up yet . . . *by the aiding of Allah!*"

Though he spoke in his haste like King David before him,
Yet he felt as he spoke that a something stole o'er him;
And his soul grew as glass, and his anger passed from it
As the vapours that pass from the Pool of Mahomet.

And the doom seemed to hang on the palace no longer,
Like a fountain it sprang when the sources feed stronger;
Shaft, turret and spire leaped upward, diminished
Like the flames of a fire,—till the palace was finished!

Without price, without flaw. And it lay on the azure
Like a diadem dropped from an emperor's treasure;
And the dome of pearl white, and the pinnacles fleckless,
Flashed back to the light, like the gems in a necklace.

So the Caliph looked forth on the turret-tops gilded;
And he said in his pride, "Is my palace not builded?
Who is more great than I that his word can avail if
My will is my will,"—said Abdallah the Caliph.

But lo! with the light he repented his scorning,
For an earthquake had shattered the whole 'ere the morning;
Of the pearl-coloured dome there was left but a ruin,—
But an arch as a home for the ring-dove to coo in.

Shaft, turret and spire—all were tumbled and crumbled;
And the soul of the Caliph within him was humbled;
And he bowed in the dust:—"There is none great but Allah!
I will build Him a Mosque"—said the Caliph Abdallah.

And the Caliph has gone to his fathers for ever,
But the Mosque that he builded shines still by the river;
And the pilgrims up-stream to this day slacken sail if
They catch the first gleam of the "Mosque of the Caliph."

EMBLEMATA AMORIS.

THE DEATH OF LOVE.

En Mors Amoris!—ran the text; and lo!
I saw that One, on ground of shoot and stem,
Had woven Love, who like a youth did go
In marriage robes, all broidered over them
With crocus-buds and stars-of-Bethlehem.
Thereto (the Worker gone), comes Time in shape,
And envious semblance of a whiskered ape,
That mars the fair design with many a thread;
And for the flowers, puts serpent-heads that gape,
And where Love looked, the features of the Dead.

THE LOVE OF DEATH.

YET one more thing of Love the limner wrought.
How that a brood of baby-shapes with wings
Lit among laughing girls, who half-distraught,
Ran here and there to catch those winsome things,
And kiss their eyes, and still their flutterings.
One—only one—sat silent as the dead,
In mourner's weed, and o'er her ashes spread,
Who saw that sight, yet had no joy of it,
But closelier drew her garment to her head.
Above this one was *Mortis Amor* writ.

"OLD CLO'."

"On revient toujours
À ses premiers amours!"

WHEN I called at the "Hollies" to-day,
In the room with the cedar-wood presses,
Aunt Deb. was just folding away
What she calls her "memorial dresses."

She'd the frock that she wore at fifteen,—
Short-waisted, of course—my abhorrence;
She'd "the loveliest"—something in "een"
That she wears in her portrait by Lawrence;

She'd the "jelick" she used—"as a Greek," (!)
She'd the habit she got her bad fall in;
She had e'en the blue *moiré antique*
That she opened Squire Lavender's ball in :—

New and old they were all of them there :—
Sleek velvet and bombazine stately,—
She had hung them each over a chair
To the "*paniers*" she's taken to lately

(Which she showed me, I think, by mistake).
And I conned o'er the forms and the fashions,
Till the faded old shapes seemed to wake
All the ghosts of my passed-away "passions;"—

From the days of love's youthfullest dream,
When the height of my shooting idea
Was to burn, like a young Polypheme,
For a sŏmewhat mature Galatea.

There was Lucy, who'd "tiffed" with her first,
And who threw me as soon as her third came;
There was Norah, whose cut was the worst,
For she told me to wait till my "berd" came;

Pale Blanche, who subsisted on salts;
Blonde Bertha, who doted on Schiller;
Poor Amy, who taught me to waltz;
Plain Ann, that I wooed for the "siller;"—

All danced round my head in a ring,
Like "The Zephyrs" that somebody painted,
All shapes of the sweet "she-thing"—
Shy, scornful, seductive, and sainted,—

To my Wife, in the days she was young . . .
"How, Sir," says that lady, disgusted,
"Do you dare to include ME among
Your loves that have faded and rusted?"

"Not at all!"—I benignly retort.

(I was just the least bit in a temper!)

"Those, alas! were the fugitive sort,

But you are my—*eadem semper!*"

Full stop,—and a Sermon. Yet think,—

There was surely good ground for a quarrel,—

She had checked me when just on the brink

Of—I feel—a remarkable MORAL.

LOVE'S FAREWELL.

"No more!" I said to Love. "No more!
I scorn your baby-arts to know!
Not now am I as once of yore;
My brow the Sage's line can show!"
"Farewell!" he laughed. "Farewell! I go!"—
And clove the air with fluttering track.
"Farewell!" he cried far off;—but lo!
He sent a Parthian arrow back!

"WHEN I SAW YOU LAST, ROSE."

(VILLANELLE.)

WHEN I saw you last, Rose,
You were only so high ;—
How fast the time goes !

Like a bud ere it blows,
You just peeped at the sky,
When I saw you last, Rose !

Now your petals unclose,
Now your May-time is nigh;—
How fast the time goes!

You would prattle your woes,
All the wherefore and why,
When I saw you last, Rose!

Now you leave me to prose,
And you seldom reply;—
How fast the time goes!

And a life,—how it grows!
You were scarcely so shy,
When I saw you last, Rose!

In your bosom it shows
There's a guest on the sly;
(How fast the time goes!)

Is it Cupid? Who knows!
Yet you used not to sigh,
When I saw you last, Rose!
How fast the time goes!

ANDRÉ LE CHAPELAIN.

(CLERK OF LOVE, 1170.)

HIS PLAINT TO VENUS OF THE COMING YEARS.

QUEEN VENUS, round whose feet,
To tend thy sacred fire,
With service bitter-sweet
Nor youths nor maidens tire;—
Goddess, whose bounties be
Large as the un-oared sea;—

Mother, whose eldest born
First stirred his stammering tongue,
In the world's youngest morn,
When the first daisies sprung;—
Whose last, when Time shall die,
In the same grave shall lie:—

Hear thou one suppliant more!
Must I, thy Bard, grow old,
Bent, with the temples frore,
Not jocund be nor bold,
To tune for folk in May
Ballad and virelay?

Shall the youths jeer and jape,
"Behold his verse doth dote,—
Leave thou Love's lute to scrape,
And tune thy wrinkled throat
To songs of 'Flesh is Grass,'"—
Shall they cry thus and pass?

And the sweet girls go by?
"Beshrew the grey-beard's tune!—
What ails his minstrelsy
To sing us snow in June!"
Shall they too laugh, and fleet
Far in the sun-warmed street?

But Thou, whose beauty bright,
  Upon thy wooded hill,
With ineffectual light
  The wan sun seeketh still ;—
Woman, whose tears are dried,
Hardly, for Adon's side,—

Have pity, Erycine !
  Withhold not all thy sweets ;
Must I thy gifts resign
  For Love's mere broken meats ;
And suit for alms prefer
That was thine Almoner ?

Must I, as bondsman, kneel
  That, in full many a cause,
Have scrolled thy just appeal ?
  Have I not writ thy Laws ?
That none from Love shall take
Save but for Love's sweet sake ;—

That none shall aught refuse
To Love of Love's fair dues ;—
That none dear Love shall scoff
Or deem foul shame thereof ;—
That none shall traitor be
To Love's own secrecy ;—

Avert,—avert it Queen !
Debarred thy listed sports,
Let me at least be seen
An usher in thy courts,
Outworn, but still indued
With badge of servitude.

When I no more may go,
As one who treads on air,
To string-notes soft and slow,
By maids found sweet and fair —
When I no more may be
Of Love's blithe company ;—

When I no more may sit
Within thine own pleasance,
To weave, in sentence fit,
Thy golden dalliance ;
When other hands than these
Record thy soft decrees ;—

Leave me at least to sing
About thine outer wall,
To tell thy pleasuring,
Thy mirth, thy festival ;
Yea, let my swan-song be
Thy grace, thy sanctity.

[*Here ended André's words :*
But One, that writeth, saith—
Betwixt his stricken chords
He heard the wheels of Death ;
And knew the fruits Love bare
But Dead-Sea apples were.]

THE CRADLE.

How steadfastly she'd worked at it!
How lovingly had drest
With all her would-be-mother's wit
That little rosy nest!

How longingly she'd hung on it!—
It sometimes seemed, she said,
There lay beneath its coverlet
A little sleeping head.

He came at last, the tiny guest,
Ere bleak December fled;
That rosy nest he never prest . . . .
Her coffin was his bed.

A TALE OF POLYPHEME.

"THERE'S nothing new"—Not that I go so far
As he who also said "There's nothing true,"
Since, on the contrary, I hold there are
Surviving still a verity or two;
But, as to novelty, in my conviction,
There's nothing new,—especially in fiction.

Hence, at the outset, I make no apology,
If this *my* story is as old as Time,
Being, indeed, that idyll of mythology,—
The Cyclop's love,—which, somewhat varied, I'm
To tell once more, the adverse Muse permitting,
In easy rhyme, and phrases neatly fitting.

"Once on a time"—there's nothing new, I said—
It may be fifty years ago or more,
Beside a lonely posting-road that led
Seaward from town, there used to stand of yore,
With low-built bar and old bow-window shady
An ancient Inn, the "Dragon and the Lady."

Say that by chance, wayfaring Reader mine,
You cast a shoe, and at this dusty Dragon,
Where beast and man were equal on the sign,
Inquired at once for Blacksmith and for flagon:
The landlord showed you, while you drank your hops,
A road-side break beyond the straggling shops.

And so directed, thereupon you led
Your halting roadster to a kind of pass,
This you descended with a crumbling tread,
And found the sea beneath you like a glass;
And soon, beside a building partly walled—
Half hut, half cave—you raised your voice and called.

Then a dog growled; and straightway there began
Tumult within—for, bleating with affright,
A goat burst out, escaping from the can;
And, following close, rose slowly into sight—
Blind of one eye, and black with toil and tan—
An uncouth, limping, heavy-shouldered man.

Part smith, part seaman, and part shepherd too:
You scarce knew which, as, pausing with the pail
Half filled with goat's milk, silently he drew
An anvil forth, and reaching shoe and nail,
Bared a red forearm, bringing into view
Anchors and hearts in shadowy tattoo.

And then he lit his fire .... But I dispense
Henceforth with you, my Reader, and your horse,
As being but a colourable pretence
To bring an awkward hero in perforce;
Since this our smith, for reasons never known,
To most society preferred his own.

Women declared that he'd an "evil eye,"—
This in a sense was true—he had but one;
Men, on the other hand, alleged him shy:
We sometimes say so of the friends we shun;
But, wrong or right, suffices to affirm it—
The Cyclops lived a veritable hermit,—

Dwelling below the cliff, beside the sea,
Caved like an ancient British Troglodyte,
Milking his goat at eve, and it may be,
Spearing the fish along the flats at night,
Until, at last, one April evening mild,
Came to the Inn a Lady and a Child.

The Lady was a nullity; the Child
One of those bright bewitching little creatures,
Who, if she once but shyly looked and smiled,
Would soften out the ruggedest of features;
Fragile and slight,—a very fay for size,—
With pale town-cheeks, and "clear germander eyes."

Nurses, no doubt, might name her "somewhat wild;"
And pedants, possibly, pronounce her "slow;"
Or corset-makers add, that for a child,
She needed "cultivation;"—all I know
Is that whene'er she spoke, or laughed, or romped, you
Felt in each act the beauty of impromptu.

The Lady was a nullity—a pale,
Nerveless and pulseless quasi-invalid,
Who, lest the ozone should in aught avail,
Remained religiously indoors to read;
So that, in wandering at her will, the Child
Did, in reality, run "somewhat wild."

At first but peering at the sanded floor
And great shark jaw-bone in the cosy bar;
Then watching idly from the dusky door,
The noisy advent of a coach or car;
Then stealing out to wonder at the fate
Of blistered Ajax by the garden gate,—

Some old ship's figure-head—until at last,
Straying with each excursion more and more,
She reached the limits of the road, and passed,
Plucking the pansies, downward to the shore,
And so, as you, respected Reader, showed,
Came to the smith's " desirable abode."

There by the cave the occupant she found,
Weaving a crate ; and, with a gladsome cry,
The dog frisked out, although the Cyclops frowned
With all the terrors of his single eye ;
Then from a mound came running, too, the goat,
Uttering her plaintive, desultory note.

The Child stood wondering at the silent man,
Doubtful to go or stay, when presently
She felt a plucking, for the goat began
To crop the trail of twining briony
She held behind her ; so that, laughing, she
Turned her light steps, retreating, to the sea.

But the goat followed her on eager feet,
And therewithal an air so grave and mild,
Coupled with such a deprecatory bleat
Of injured confidence, that soon the Child
Filled the lone shore with louder merriment,
And e'en the Cyclops' heavy brow unbent.

Thus grew acquaintanceship between the pair,
The girl and goat;—for thenceforth, day by day,
The Child would bring her four-foot friend such fare
As might be gathered on the downward way:—
Foxglove, or broom, and "yellow cytisus,"
Dear to all goats since Greek Theocritus.

But, for the Cyclops, that misogynist
Having, by stress of circumstances, smiled,
Felt it at least incumbent to resist
Futher encroachment, and as one beguiled
By adverse fortune, with the half-door shut,
Dwelt in the dim seclusion of his hut.

And yet not less from thence he still must see
That daily coming, and must hear the goat
Bleating her welcome; then, towards the sea,
The happy voices of the playmates float;
Until, at last, enduring it no more,
He took his wonted station by the door.

Here was, of course, a pitiful surrender;
For soon the Child, on whom the Evil eye
Seemed to exert an influence but slender,
Would run to question him, till, by and by,
His moody humour like a cloud dispersing,
He found himself uneasily conversing.

That was a sow's-ear, that an egg of skate,
And this an agate rounded by the wave.
Then came enquiries still more intimate
About himself, the anvil, and the cave;
And then, at last, the Child, without alarm
Would even spell the letters on his arm.

"G—A—L—*Galatea.*" So there grew
On his part, like some half-remembered tale,
The new-found memory of an ice-bound crew,
And vague garrulities of spouting whale,—
Of sea-cow basking upon berg and floe,
And Polar light, and stunted Eskimo.

Till, in his heart, which hitherto had been
Locked as those frozen barriers of the North,
There came once more the season of the green,—
The tender bud-time and the putting forth,
So that the man, before the new sensation,
Felt for the child a kind of adoration;—

Rising by night, to search for shell and flower,
To lay in places where she found them first;
Hoarding his cherished goat's milk for the hour
When those young lips might feel the summer's thirst;
Holding himself for all devotion paid
By that clear laughter of the little maid.

Dwelling, alas! in that fond Paradise
Where no to-morrow quivers in suspense,—
Where scarce the changes of the sky suffice
To break the soft forgetfulness of sense,—
Where dreams become realities; and where
I willingly would leave him—did I dare.

Yet for a little space it still endured,
Until, upon a day when least of all
The softened Cyclops, by his hopes assured,
Dreamed the inevitable blow could fall,
Came the stern moment that should all destroy,
Bringing a pert young cockerel of a Boy.

Middy, I think,—he'd "*Acis*" on his box;—
A black-eyed, sun-burnt, mischief-making imp,
Pet of the mess,—a Puck with curling locks,
Who straightway travestied the Cyclops' limp,
And marvelled how his cousin so could care
For such a "one-eyed, melancholy Bear."

So there was war at once; not overt yet,
For still the Child, unwilling, would not break
The new acquaintanceship, nor quite forget
The pleasant past; while, for his treasure's sake,
The boding smith with clumsy efforts tried
To win the laughing scorner to his side.

There are some sights pathetic; none I know
More sad than this: to watch a slow-wrought mind
Humbling itself, for love, to come and go
Before some petty tyrant of its kind;
Saddest, ah!—saddest far,—when it can do
Nought to advance the end it has in view.

This was at least the Cyclops' case, until,
Whether the boy beguiled the Child away,
Or whether that limp Matron on the Hill
Woke from her novel reading trance, one day
He waited long and wearily in vain,—
But, from that hour, they never came again.

Yet still he waited, hoping—wondering if
They still might come, or dreaming that he heard
The sound of far-off voices on the cliff,
Or starting strangely when the she-goat stirred;
But nothing broke the silence of the shore,
And, from that hour, the Child returned no more.

Therefore our Cyclops sorrowed,—not as one
Who can command the gamut of despair;
But as a man who feels his days are done,
So dead they seem,—so desolately bare;
For, though he'd lived a hermit, 'twas but only
Now he discovered that his life was lonely.

The very sea seemed altered, and the shore;
The very voices of the air were dumb;
Time was an emptiness that o'er and o'er
Ticked with the dull pulsation "Will she come?"
So that he sat "consuming in a dream,"
Much like his old forerunner, Polypheme.

Until there came the question, "Is she gone?"
With such sad sick persistence that at last,
Urged by the hungry thought that drove him on,
Along the steep declivity he passed,
And by the summit panting stood and still,
Just as the horn was sounding on the hill.

Then, in a dream, beside the "Dragon" door,
The smith saw travellers standing in the sun;
Then came the horn again, and three or four
Looked idly at him from the roof, but One,—
A Child within,—suffused with sudden shame,
Thrust forth a hand, and called to him by name.

Thus the coach vanished from his sight, but he
Limped back with bitter pleasure in his pain;
He was not all forgotten—could it be?
And yet the knowledge made the memory vain;
And then—he felt a pressure in his throat,
So, for that night, forgot to milk his goat.

What then might come of silent misery,
What new resolvings then might intervene,
I know not. Only, with the morning sky,
The goat stood tethered on the "Dragon" green,
And those who, wondering, questioned thereupon,
Found the hut empty,—for the man was gone.

LINES TO A STUPID PICTURE.

"—the music of the moon
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale."
AYLMER'S FIELD.

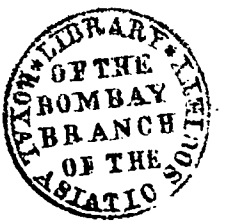
FIVE geese,—a landscape damp and wild,—
A stunted, not too pretty, child,
Beneath a battered gingham;
Such things, to say the least, require
A Muse of more-than-average Fire
To adequately sing 'em.

And yet—Why should they? Souls of mark
Have sprung from such;—e'en Joan of Arc
Had scarce a grander duty;
Not always ('tis a maxim trite)
From righteous sources comes the right,—
From beautiful the beauty.

Who shall decide where seed is sown?
Maybe some priceless germ was blown
To this unwholesome marish;
(And what must grow will still increase
Though cackled round by half the geese
And ganders in the parish.)

Maybe this homely face may hide
A Staël before whose mannish pride
Our frailer sex may tremble;
Perchance this audience anserine
May hiss (O fluttering Muse of mine!)—
May hiss—a future Kemble!

Or say the gingham shadows o'er
An undeveloped Hannah More!—
A latent Mrs. Trimmer!!
Who shall affirm it?—who deny?—
Since of the truth nor you nor I
Discern the faintest glimmer?



So then—Caps off, my Masters all;
Reserve your final word,—recall
Your all-too-hasty strictures;
Caps off, I say, for Wisdom sees
Potential possibilities
In most unhopeful pictures.

IN THE BELFRY.

WRITTEN UNDER RETHEL'S "DEATH, THE FRIEND."

TOLL! Is it night, or daylight yet?
Somewhere the birds seem singing still,
Tho' surely now the sun has set.

Toll! But who tolls the Bell once more?
He must have climbed the parapet.
Did I not bar the belfry door?

Who can it be?—the Bernardine,
That used to pray with me of yore?
No,—for the monk was not so lean.

This must be He who, legend saith,
Comes sometimes with a kindlier mien
And tolls a knell.—This shape is Death.

Good-bye, old Bell! So let it be.
How strangely now I draw my breath
What is this haze of light I see?...

IN MANUS TUAS, DOMINE!

BEFORE THE CURTAIN.

"MISS PEACOCK'S called." And who demurs?
Not I who write, for certain;
If praise be due, one sure prefers
That some such face as fresh as hers
Should come before the curtain.

And yet, most strange to say, I find
(E'en bards are sometimes prosy)
Her presence here but brings to mind
That undistinguished crowd behind
For whom life's not so rosy.

The pleased young *premier* led her on,
But where are all the others?
Where is that nimble servant John?
And where's the comic Uncle gone?
And where that best of Mothers?

Where is "Sir Lumley Leycester, Bart.?"
And where the crafty Cousin?—
That man may have a kindly heart,
And yet each night ('tis in the part)
Must poison half-a-dozen!

Where is the cool Detective,—he
Should surely be applauded?
The Lawyer, who refused the fee?
The Wedding Guests (in number three)?—
Why are they all defrauded?

The men who worked the cataract?
The plush-clad carpet lifters?—
Where is the countless host, in fact,
Whose cue is not to speak, but act,—
The "supers" and the shifters?

Think what a crowd whom none recall,
Unsung,—unpraised,—unpitied;—
Women for whom no bouquets fall,
And men whose names no galleries bawl,—
The Great un-Benefit-ed!

Ah, Reader, ere you turn the page,
I leave you this for Moral:—
Remember those who tread Life's stage
With weary feet and scantest wage,
And ne'er a leaf for laurel!

THE LAST DESPATCH.

HURRAH ! the Season's past at last ;
At length we've 'done' our pleasure.
Dear 'Pater,' if you *only* knew
How much I've *longed* for home and you,—
Our own green lawn and leisure !

And then the pets ! One half forgets
The dear dumb friends—in Babel.
I hope my special fish is fed ;—
I long to see poor Nigra's head
Pushed at me from the stable !

I long to see the cob and 'Rob,'—
Old Bevis and the Collie;
And *won't* we read in 'Traveller's Rest'!
Home readings after all are best;—
None else seem half so "jolly!"

One misses your dear kindly store
Of fancies quaint and funny;
One misses, too, your kind *bon-mot*;—
The Mayfair wit I mostly know
Has more of gall than honey!

How tired one grows of "calls and balls!"
This "*toujours perdrix*" wearies;
I'm longing, quite, for 'Notes on Knox';
(*À-propos*, I've the loveliest box
For holding *Notes and Queries!*)

A change of place would suit my case.
You'll take me?—on probation?
As 'Lady-help,' then, let it be;
I feel (as Lavender shall see),
That Jams are *my* vocation!

How's Lavender? My love to her.
Does Briggs still flirt with Flowers?—
Has Hawthorn stubbed the common clear?—
You'll let me give *some* picnics, Dear,
And ask the Vanes and Towers?

I met Belle Vane. "HE's" still in Spain!
Sir John won't let them marry.
Aunt drove the boys to Brompton Rink;
And Charley,—changing Charlie,—think,
Is now *au mieux* with Carry!

And NO. You know what '*No*' I mean—
There's no one yet at present:
The Benedick I have in view
Must be a something wholly new,—
One's father's *far* too pleasant.

So hey, I say, for home and you!
Good-bye to Piccadilly;
Balls, beaux, and Bolton-row, adieu!
Expect me, Dear, at half-past two;
Till then,—your Own Fond—MILLY.

DORA *VERSUS* ROSE.

"The case is proceeding."

FROM the tragic-est novels at Mudie's—
  At least, on a practical plan—
To the tales of mere Hodges and Judys,
  One love is enough for a man.
But no case that I ever yet met is
  Like mine: I am equally fond
Of Rose, who a charming brunette is,
  And Dora, a blonde.

Each rivals the other in powers—
Each waltzes, each warbles, each paints—
Miss Rose, chiefly tumble-down towers;
Miss Do., perpendicular saints.
In short, to distinguish is folly;
'Twixt the pair I am come to the pass
Of Macheath, between Lucy and Polly,—
Or Buridan's ass.

If it happens that Rosa I've singled
For a soft celebration in rhyme,
Then the ringlets of Dora get mingled
Somehow with the tune and the time;
Or I painfully pen me a sonnet
To an eyebrow intended for Do.'s,
And behold I am writing upon it
The legend, "To Rose."

Or I try to draw Dora (my blotter
  Is all overscrawled with her head),
If I fancy at last that I've got her,
  It turns to her rival instead;
Or I find myself placidly adding
  To the rapturous tresses of Rose
Miss Dora's bud-mouth, and her madding,
    Ineffable nose.

Was there ever so sad a dilemma?
  For Rose I would perish (*pro tem.*);
For Dora I'd willingly stem a—
  (Whatever might offer to stem);
But to make the invidious election,—
  To declare that on either one's side
I've a scruple,—a grain, more affection,
    I *cannot* decide.

And, as either so hopelessly nice is,
My sole and my final resource
Is to wait some indefinite crisis,—
Some feat of molecular force,
To solve me this riddle conducive
By no means to peace or repose,
Since the issue can scarce be inclusive
Of Dora *and* Rose.

(Afterthought.)

But, perhaps, if a third (say a Norah),
Not quite so delightful as Rose,—
Not wholly so charming as Dora,—
Should appear, is it wrong to suppose,—
As the claims of the others are equal,—
And flight—in the main—is the best,—
That I might . . . But no matter,—the sequel
Is easily guessed.

IN TOWN.

(PANTOUM.)

"*The blue fly sung in the pane.*"—TENNYSON.

JUNE in the zenith is torrid,
(There is that woman again !)
Here, with the sun on one's forehead,
Thought gets dry in the brain.

There is that woman again :
"Strawberries ! fourpence a pottle !"
Thought gets dry in the brain ;
Ink gets dry in the bottle.

"Strawberries! fourpence a pottle!"
O for the green of a lane
Ink gets dry in the bottle;
"Buzz" goes a fly in the pane!

O for the green of a lane!
Where one might lie and be lazy!
"Buzz" goes a fly in the pane;
Bluebottles drive me crazy!

Where one might lie and be lazy!
Careless of town and all in it!
Bluebottles drive me crazy:
I shall go mad in a minute!

Careless of town and all in it,
With some one to soothe and to still you;
I shall go mad in a minute;
Bluebottle, then I shall kill you!

With some one to soothe and to still you,
As only one's feminine kin do ;—
Bluebottle, then I shall kill you :
There now ! I've broken the window !

As only one's feminine kin do,—
Some muslin-clad Mabel or May !
There now ! I've broken the window !
Bluebottle's off and away !

Some muslin-clad Mabel or May,
To dash one with eau de Cologne ;
Bluebottle's off and away ;
And why should I stay here alone !

To dash one with eau de Cologne,
All over one's talented forehead !
And why should I stay here alone !—
JUNE in the zenith is torrid.

ARS VICTRIX.

" Oui, l'œuvre sort plus belle
D'une forme au travail
Rebelle,
Vers, marbre, onyx, émail."

THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

YES; when the ways oppose—
When the hard means rebel,
Fairer the work out-grows,—
More potent far the spell.

O Poet, then, forbear
The loosely-sandalled verse,
Choose rather thou to wear
The buskin—strait and terse;

See that thy form demand
The labour of the file;
Leave to the tiro's hand
The limp pedestrian style.

Sculptor, do thou discard
The yielding clay,—consign
To Parian pure and hard
The beauty of thy line;—

Model thy Satyr's face
In bronze of Syracuse;
In the veined agate trace
The profile of thy Muse.

Painter, that still must mix
But transient tints anew,
Thou in the furnace fix
The firm enamel's hue;

Let the smooth tile receive
Thy dove-drawn Erycinè;
Thy Sirens blue at eve
Coiled in a wash of wine.

All passes. ART alone
Enduring stays to us;
The Bust out-lasts the throne,—
The Coin, Tiberius;

Even the gods must go;
Only the lofty Rhyme
Not countless years o'erthrow,—
Not long array of time.

Paint, chisel then, or write;
But, that the work surpass,
With the hard fashion fight,—
With the resisting mass.

APPLE-BLOSSOMS.

In the young year, when through the cloudless mind
But light dreams float, and blossoms strew the ground,
Among mossed apple-trees a trunk I found,
And carved a name I knew across the rind.

Then in the pink, soft-settling drift reclined,
I slept, and dreamed that she my heart had crowned
E'en then must pass across this orchard, bound
On errand slight, or purpose scarce defined.

And (in my dream) methought my lady meek
Did come, in truth, and read the deep-cut name;
And dearer grew her eyes, and in her cheek

The sweet blood fluttered like a little flame.
Then in a shower of bloom, I woke to speak . . .
And lo! my LOVE, suffused with gentle shame.

THE LOST ELIXIR.

'One drop of ruddy human blood puts more life into the veins of a poem than all the delusive 'aurum potabile' that can be distilled out of the choicest library."—LOWELL.

AH, yes, that "drop of human blood!"—
We had it once, may be,
When our young song's impetuous flood
First poured its ecstacy;
But now the shrunk poetic vein
Yields not that priceless drop again.

We toil,—as toiled we not of old ;—
Our patient hands distil
The shining spheres of chemic gold
With hard-won, fruitless skill ;
But that red drop still seems to be
Beyond our utmost alchemy.

Perchance, but most in later age,
Time's after-gift, a tear,
Will strike a pathos on the page
Beyond all art sincere ;
But that " one drop of human blood "
Has gone with life's first leaf and bud.

A LOVE-SONG.

(A.D. 1700.)

WHEN first in CELIA'S ear I poured
A yet unpractised pray'r,
My trembling tongue sincere ignored
The aids of 'sweet' and 'fair.'
I only said, as in me lay,
I'd strive her 'worth' to reach;
She frowned, and turned her eyes away,—
So much for truth in speech.

Then DELIA came. I changed my plan;
I praised her to her face;
I praised her features,—praised her fan,
Her lap-dog and her lace;
I swore that not till Time were dead
My passion should decay;
She, smiling, gave her hand, and said
'Twill last then—for a DAY.

"WHEN FINIS COMES."

(TO A. K.)

WHEN *Finis* comes, the Book we close,
And somewhat sadly, Fancy goes,
With backward step, from stage to stage
Of that accomplished pilgrimage . . .
The thorn lies thicker than the rose!

There is so much that no one knows,—
So much un-reached that none suppose;
What flaws! what faults!—on every page,
When *Finis* comes.

Still,—they must pass! The swift Tide flows.
Though not for all the laurel grows,
Perchance, in this be-slandered age,
The worker, mainly, wins his wage;—
And Time will sweep both friends and foes
When FINIS comes!

NOTES.

Note 1, Page 4.

Nay,—'twas a song of Sainte-Aulaire.

It is but just to the octogenarian Marquis, whom the Duchess of Maine surnamed her '*vieux berger*,' to say that he is guiltless of the song here ascribed to him. For it, and the similar pieces in these *Proverbs*, the Author is alone responsible. In the *Secrets of the Heart*, however, he has, without attempting to revive the persons, borrowed the names of the charming heroines of *À quoi rêvent les Jeunes Filles.*

Note 2, Page 39.

Ensign (of Bragg's) made a terrible clangour.

Despite its suspicious appropriateness in this case, 'Bragg's' regiment of Foot-Guards really existed; and was ordered to Flanders in April, 1742, with, among others, that very 'Handasyd's' in which Sterne's father had been a poor Lieutenant. (See *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1742, i. 217.)

NOTE 3, PAGE 42.

Porto Bello at last was ta'en.

Porto Bello was taken in November, 1739. But Vice-Admiral Vernon's despatches did not reach England until the following March. (See *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1740, pp. 124, *et seq.*)

NOTE 4, PAGE 45.

And a spavined mare that was worth a "cole."

"I told you first, and all along,
I'll lay this cole you're in the wrong."

These lines are from *A Poetical Description of Mr.* Hogarth's *Election Prints, in four Cantoes*, 1759. The speaker, the Cobbler of the *Canvassing for Votes* (Plate ii.), is discussing the taking of *Porto Bello* with the Barber.

NOTE 5, PAGE 47.

In the fresh contours of his "Milkmaid's" face.

See the *Enraged Musician*, an engraving of which was published in November of the following year (1741). It would be easy to annotate this Ballad more fully; but the reader will perhaps take the details for granted. It may however be stated that there is no foundation in fact for the story.

NOTE 6, PAGE 52.

A bolder rider than Bellerophon.

'*Eques ipso melior Bellerophonte.*'—HOR. iii. 12.

NOTE 7, PAGE 55.

The Thefts of Mercury.

'*Te, boves olim nisi reddidisses*
Per dolum amotas, puerum minaci
Voce dum terret, viduus pharetra
Risit Apollo.'—HOR. i. 10.

NOTE 8, PAGE 65.

These are leaves of my rose.

Six of these *Triolets* appeared in the *Graphic* for May 23, 1874. The *Rondel* at p. 78 was printed in *Evening Hours* for April, 1876; the *Ballade* at p. 70, and the *Rondeau* at p. 82, in *Evening Hours* for May, 1876. The *Villanelle* at p. 144 has not hitherto been published.

NOTE 9, PAGE 78.

Rondels and Rondeaus.

The old French forms which M. THÉODORE DE BANVILLE has turned to such good use in his *Odes Funambulesques* and *Occidentales* are rather better known at this moment than when, in the course of 1876, most of these attempts were published. The *Rondeau* (not the first in English by a century or so) is here written upon the model of VOITURE; the *Rondel* upon that of CHARLES OF ORLEANS, but with a (symmetric) deviation in the arrangement of the rhymes. The last line of the *Rondel* has been retained as optional, not only because the practice of the *roi des rimes* in the *Occidentales* is at variance with his pre-

cept elsewhere expressed, but because, in some of the Orleans MSS., the couplet is given. Finally, it seems required by the present arrangement. No doubt, when Mr. EDMUND GOSSE produces his promised book on Poetic Forms, we shall be precisely enlightened on this and other particulars. Meanwhile, the *Rondeau*, which, as M. de Banville says happily, succeeds to the *Rondel* '*comme le roi Louis succède à Pharamond*,' looks the more promising of the pair. Something is to be made of this form, 'If only'—to use the words of the Authors of *Lays from Latin Lyres*—

> 'If only some superior poet
> Would lend his mighty genius to it.'

One of these writers, by the way, has gracefully rhymed a lyric of Catullus—'*en Rondeau.*'

NOTE 10, PAGE 81.

You bid me try.

The reader may prefer the original of this paraphrase:

> '*Ma foy, c'est fait de moy, car Isabeau*
> *M'a conjuré de luy faire un Rondeau,*
> *Cela me met en une peine extréme.*
> *Quoy treize vers, huit en* eau, *cinq en* eme
> *Je luy ferois aussi-tôt un batteau!*
> *En voila cinq pourtant en un monceau:*
> *Faisons en huict, en invoquant Brodeau,*
> *Et puis mettons, par quelque stratagême,*
> *Ma foy, c'est fait.*

Si je pouvois encor de mon cerveau
Tirer cinq vers, l'ouvrage seroit beau ;
Mais cependant, je suis dedans l'onziéme,
Et si je croy que je fais le douziéme,
En voila treize ajustez au niveau.
Ma foy, c'est fait.'

NOTE 11, PAGE 95.

Some moneyed mourner's "love or pride."

'Thus much alone we know—Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife: Behold his love or pride!'
Childe Harold, iv. 103.

NOTE 12, PAGE 102.

Huddling they came, with shag sides caked of mire.

See the picture of *Circe* by Mr. Briton Riviere.

NOTE 13, PAGE 152.

The Cradle.

The leading idea of these lines is taken from a French sonnet,—*Le Berceau*, by Eugène Manuel.

NOTE 14, PAGE 183.

In Town.

The *Pantoum*,—a native song of the Malays,—was first called attention to by M. Victor Hugo in the 'Notes' to the *Orientales*,

p. 189 of Hachette's edn., 1865. Here are three stanzas of his translation :—

'*Les papillons jouent à l'entour sur leurs ailes ;*
Ils volent vers la mer, près de la chaîne des rochers.
Mon cœur s'est senti malade dans ma poitrine,
Depuis mes premiers jours jusqu' à l'heure présente.

Ils volent vers la mer, près de la chaîne des rochers .
Le vautour dirige son essor vers Bandam.
Depuis mes premiers jours jusqu' à l'heure présente,
J'ai admiré bien de jeunes gens.'

Le vautour dirige son essor vers Bandam . .
Et laisse tomber de ses plumes à Patani.
J'ai admiré bien de jeunes gens ;
Mais nul n'est à comparer à l'objet de mon choix.

M. de Banville and others have written Pantoums serious and familiar. *In Town* (printed in *Good Words* for June, 1876) is an experiment in the latter vein, which any one may excel who will.

NOTE 15, PAGE 183.

Not countless years o'erthrow,
Not long array of time.

—'*innumerabilis*
Annorum series et fuga temporum.'
HOR. iii. 30.

This piece is a paraphrase,—would it were possible to write translation !—of the concluding poem in Gautier's *Émaux et Camées.*

POSTSCRIPT.

With a few exceptions, the verses in this volume, like those in VIGNETTES IN RHYME, of which it is in some sort the complement, have been printed before in magazines or other periodicals. One or two pieces were suggested by pictures; one appeared under pseudonym. All have been revised, or re-written; and I can but wish for them as kind a welcome as that given to the former collection of trifles. To complete the motto on the title-page,

'— *mihi parva locuto*
Sufficit in vestras sæpe redire manus.'

THE END.

Some Opinions of the Press on "Vignettes in Rhyme."

QUARTERLY REVIEW.

"His (Mr. Dobson's) recent volume of collected poems is one of unusual promise . . . The general impression produced by these 'Vignettes' is very favourable to the writer's mental attitude. Their keen and sprightly criticism of men and manners is unspoilt by flippancy, their healthy appreciation of life's purest pleasures is tempered by kindly concern for the lot of those who miss them."

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"The most promising of the younger writers of minor verse is Mr. Austin Dobson, whose 'Vignettes in Rhyme' betoken considerable poetic fancy."

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"If there is any taste left in us for subtle wit, delicate humour, happy rhymes, and well-turned expressions, 'Vignettes in Rhyme' ought to be the most popular book of the day . . . There is not a piece in the book which is not graceful. We would gladly linger over such a delightful volume."

SATURDAY REVIEW.

"Even if his 'Vignettes in Rhyme' had come by itself we should have given it a kindly welcome. But we picked it up out of a pile of the most worthless among the Minor Poets, and we felt as grateful as ever feels a man who in the pocket of some garment among a heap of cast-away clothes finds a bright new shilling. . . . Mr. Dobson, however, is more than a mere versifier. In two or three of his Poems he shows a skill in painting with his pen that might raise the envy of many of his rival artists with the brush."

SPECTATOR.

"Mr. Dobson gives us something more than the tone and manner of cultivated social life, with its vivid ripple of thought and feeling. . . . We were hardly prepared for the touches of genuine beauty which adorn so many of these little poems, and set the verses of 'society' in a frame-work of softer and more imaginative loveliness than the refined give-and-take of social intellect and sentiment usually suggest. What lovely bits of poetic feeling, for instance, gleam through the beautiful little poem on 'The Sick Man and the Birds.' . . . Tenderness when it is playful and playfulness when it is tender are both perfectly given in this charming little book, which contains also an exquisite sense of natural beauty."

ATHENÆUM.

"Of the books before us, that by Mr. Dobson takes quite the highest place. His 'Vignettes' are really clever, clear-cut, and careful. . . . The best poem in the book—and some three or four lines of it are strikingly fine and

original—is 'The Dying of Tanneguy du Bois.' . . . Any man who could write the lines we have italicised may do still better things."

EXAMINER.

"If we neglect the hints of classicality of form and simplicity of subject conveyed by the word 'cameo,' it remains more closely representative than 'Vignette' of the portraits, perfectly modelled, and instinct with life and meaning, which constitute the 'Vignettes in Rhyme.' Of these, perhaps, the daintiest is a story Mr. Dobson weaves out of an incident in the 'Life of Francis Boucher.' . . . As a writer of *vers de société* it is not too much to say that Mr. Dobson is almost, if not quite, unrivalled. . . . There is keener wit in the satire addressed 'To Q. H. F.' Of this poem, on which Mr. Dobson can well afford to build his fame, we quote a few exquisite stanzas."—[Stanzas V. V. VI. quoted.]

ACADEMY.

"His own words explain the limits of the excellence which may still be attained by writers of *Vers de Société*, of whom Mr. Dobson is among the best. . . . 'Lydia Languish' is a not unworthy pendant to Praed's 'My own Araminta say No.' . . . 'The Virtuoso' is a neatly turned portrait of a sub-humorous egoist; 'An Autumn Idyll' is a really sprightly burlesque of the Eclogues, and there are a couple of Odes of Horace pleasantly diluted."

GRAPHIC.

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